
HOLY WRIT

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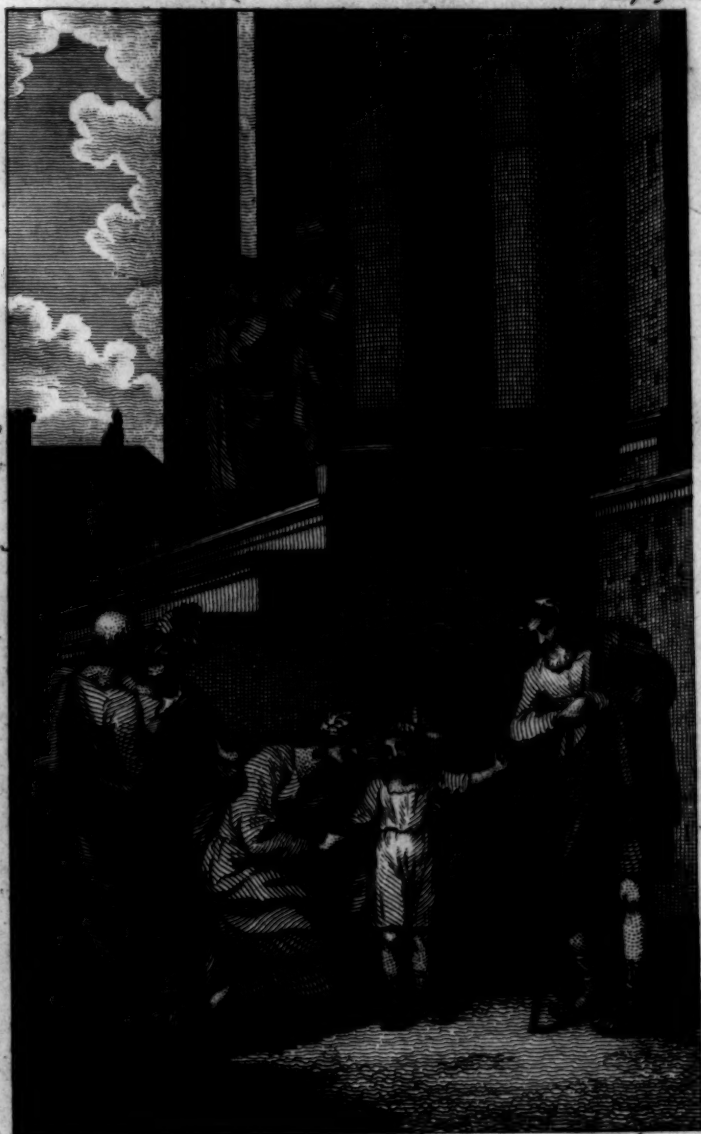
OF CHRISTIANITY

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.



CHRIST LOST AND RECOVERD.

Vol III page 365.



Corbould delin.

Barlow sculp.

Mary Your father and myself have
sought you sorrowing.

Published as the Act directs, by M A Maitlan July 2^d 1791.

HOLY WRIT

FAMILIARIZED TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

IN A SERIES OF
PATHETIC STORIES,
AND
AFFECTING DIALOGUES:
COMPRIZING
THE EVENTS OF TIME,
AS TOLD IN SCRIPTURE, FROM THE FIRST
OF THINGS, TO THE ESTABLISH-
MENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

AN ORIGINAL WORK.

BY THE REV. MARK ANTHONY MEILAN.

VOL. III.

NIL DICTU FÆDUM AUT VISU, HÆC LIMINA TANGAT
INTRA QUÆ PUER EST. JUVENAL.

L O N D O N :

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1791.

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HOLY WRIT

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS

PATHETIC STORIES

THE FIRST



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HOLY

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FAMILIARIZED TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE FIFTH AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLES CCLXXVI. CCLXXVII.

2 KINGS xi.

AHAZIAH'S SON ANOINTED KING
OF JUDAH, AND THE DEATH OF
ATHALIAH.

BEFORE CHRIST 878.

SCENE. *The Temple at Jerusalem.*

JEHOIADA, JEHOASH, and others.

JEHOIADA.

THUS Jehoash, at length, will all the
people's wishes be fulfilled, when you are
crowned their king. God grant your reign
may be both long and prosperous likewise.

VOL. III.

B

All.

All. Long live king Jehoash!

Jehoash. And long too may you live, my friends, to be a witness of that length of life you wish me. I am nothing but a child at present, yet have I been carefully instructed. Thus far then my wish. But what sufficient testimony of my gratitude can I evince, or how express that sense I cherish of your loyalty, which saved me from the cruelty of Athaliah, who, although my father's mother, hearing of her son's unhappy death, inflicted at the nod of Jehu, the proud tyrant, who now reigns in Israel, put to death all those proceeding from him.

Jehoiada. Yes, dear prince, the murder of her son, now seven years since, which left the throne of Judah vacant, kindled in the heart of that aspiring woman a desire of reigning in his stead; which, that she might accomplish, she demurred not to destroy, without distinction, every one whose life she thought an obstacle to her ambitious views; and you, my lord, would certainly have perished in the massacre, but that your aunt Jehosheba, with pious care preserved you; since which time, till now, you have been hidden from her here, within the temple, while the land has groaned beneath her tyranny; but which, as we have hopes, will now be quickly over.

Jehoash.

Jehoash. If it should not, I have sense enough to ask myself why I have thus consented to become your king.

Jehoiada. Prepare then for this coronation, which will give a king to Judah worthy such a name. Guards, you remember to what station we assigned you : Range yourselves accordingly ; that if your shots bring Athaliah hither, every one may—but you know the rest. And now, bring forth the crown.—(*To Jehoash*). Receive, king Jehoash, from God's high priest, this crown, which, to evince their love and loyalty together, a whole people place upon your head (*putting on the crown*). The work is done. Bow therefore, one and all your knee before him, clap your hands together, and, as not long since you did unordered, say once more, “ Long live the king !”

All (kneeling). Long live the king!

Jehoash. Thanks once again, good friends. Heaven grant your wishes, and enable me in future to bear rule among you as I ought.

Jehoiada. Sound trumpets on both sides : once for the people : (*A flourish*) and once likewise for the king : (*Another flourish*). Good ! Good ! It cannot be but that queen Athaliah will hear this, contiguous as her house is to the temple. It is there, upon the eastern quarter ;

and methinks, I see her entering, Yes, it is herself: she has already heard the shouting of the people, and comes forth to know the cause thereof.

Athaliah (entering). What do I see! My grandson Jehoash, whom I supposed long since deceased! How comes it then he should be here, and with the crown upon his head? Help! Treason! Treason!

Jehoiada. Treason there may be; but in whose person?—Execrable woman, seven long years have passed since through all Judah, life and death have been determined at your pleasure: but the tyranny is now to finish.

Jehoash. Did Jehoiada, God's priest, bestow so harsh a name upon you? Truly did he; and what pity that a grandson cannot take it off. The God of Israel, that has saved me from your rage amid those murders,—

Athaliah. Is it come to this? May not my life be threatened? (*Turning to depart*).

Jehoiada. Stop her: she is meditating an escape.

Jehoash. No, let her go.

Jehoiada. Go, after her deserts! Pursue and fall upon her: but not here. Let not the house of God be stained with such defilement as her blood would bring upon it.—(*Several run out*).

Jehoash.

Jehoash. Oh Jehoiada! what mean you, talking thus of blood? Remember this, that after all her crimes, she is my father's mother.

Jehoiada. Yes, dear prince, I do remember it: but justice must be satisfied; and it can only be appeased by her immediate death. Should we now let her live, she would find means to slaughter those that have stepped forth in your behalf, nor would yourself be safe.

Jehoash. Must I submit to this? Destroy my father's mother, lest my father's mother should destroy her grandson! Can there be such inhumanity in any woman's heart? No, certainly. Recall then those stern messengers you have sent forth to execute this bloody deed.

Jehoiada. It is too late: they have discharged their duty, and are coming back.—(*To the party re-entering*). Well, friends: have you performed this act of justice upon Athaliah? Is she dead?

One of the Party. She is expiring even now, though not beneath our swords. She was encountered in her flight by others, who, from detestation of her crimes, fell on her just without the ranges, and so unrestrainable was their revenge, they would not let her have so little as a moment's time to all on God for pardon of her sins.

Jehoash. Oh miserable hour!

Jehoiada. You are as yet so young, dear prince, believe me, that you cannot guess at the enormity of her offences? but e'er long, will own the wisdom of your counsellors in this event. Come, leave the temple, and rely on the fidelity of those that have thus happily established you upon the throne of Judah. Come.

Jehoash. My mind is full of horror; notwithstanding which, I own, Jehoiada, you are the priest of God, and cannot but do every thing for justice.

CCLXXVIII.

2 KINGS xii. xiii.

FURTHER HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

BEFORE CHRIST BETWEEN 878 AND 840.

JEHU, king of Israel, had possessed the throne seven years, when, as related in the article preceding, Jehoash was crowned, and Athaliah slain without the temple. After this, king Jehu reigned still one and twenty years;
in

in all which space of time, he proved himself a wicked prince, continually doing evil in God's sight.

Jehoash, who, as said already, was but seven years old, when constituted king of Judah, ruled with justice, owing to the good advice Jehoiada imparted. Forty years he reigned, and in his reign the temple for the first time was repaired. Towards the conclusion of his life, the king of Syria, who before, according to Elisha's prophecy, had been a bitter enemy to Israel, turned his thoughts upon Jerusalem, and would have brought his armies thither, had not Jehoash thought fit to buy him off with all the wealth his father had amassed, as well as with his own, and what was in the temple.

Jehu died about the space of nineteen years before the king of Judah; and his son, named Jehoahaz, governed in his stead. This last, as well as Jehu, acted wickedly for nearly seventeen years: in all which time, he followed, as is said, the enormities of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin. To punish him, God visited the land with new calamities from year to year; for Hazael, king of Syria, and his son Benhadad, who succeeded him, were constant enemies to Israel.

Nothing more than this is told of Jehoahaz,

who, as just now stated, governed seventeen years; and dying, left the kingdom to his son, named Joash.

Two years after this, did Jehoash's servants rise upon their master, and assassinate him, after he had governed forty years, as likewise has been mentioned; and his son, called Amaziah, was appointed king of Judah in his place.

CCLXXIX. CCLXXX.

2 KINGS xiv.

THE VIRTUE OF ELISHA'S BONES,
AND JOASH'S THREE CONQUESTS
OVER KING BENHADAD.

BEFORE CHRIST 836.

SCENE. *A street.*

Two ISRAELITES,

First ISRAELITE.

WHAT pity, that these three so signal conquests we have just obtained by God's assistance from Benhadad, are not to be followed by the other two, which he designed us!

Second

Second Israelite. How the other two! What means this riddle?

First Israelite. Is it possible you should not yet have been informed of what Elisha prophesied upon his death-bed; or, more wonderful! should have forgot it?

Second Israelite. To forget it was not in my power, since till this moment, never did I hear a word thereof: but can you tell me? Let me therefore know, good friend, what you allude to.

First Israelite. Hear then, while I tell you the whole story. What I am to mention happened while our greater enemy, the father of Benhadad, whom these three times we have vanquished, governed Syria. Just before his death, was our Elisha likewise sick. King Joash came upon a visit to him, and beholding in what piteous state he lay, wept over him, and said (alluding, doubtless, to the moment when the prophet parted with Elijah), "Oh, my father! I behold the chariot and the horses." This Elisha did not answer to, and only said: "Take bow and arrows."

Second Israelite. But why so?

First Israelite. That you shall hear. The king obeyed; and then Elisha bade him throw the eastern window open, and shoot forth an

arrow. Joash shot, and at the instant when it left the bow, cried out Elisha: " Good! the
" arrow of the Lord's deliverance from the
" hand of Syria; for in Aphek shall you ut-
" terly consume them: but stamp now upon
" the ground." This likewise Joash did, three
times succeeding one another, and then ceased:
but would you think it, friend? Elisha sud-
denly grew wroth, that he had only done so
thrice, and said: " You should have stamped
" at least five times: in which case, would
" your arms have utterly subdued the Syrian
" host; whereas, since you have stamped but
" thrice, they shall be only thrice defeated."
This is what Elisha prophesied. Judge, there-
fore, if I was not in the right to mourn that
we have not obtained two other conquests on
Benhadad's host, since God designed us so much
happiness.

Second Israelite. Too much so, I must own;
for what Elisha promised would have surely
happened, had but Joash done, as possibly he
was expected to have done. Elisha was so good
a man. His life was passed in virtue; and not
only that, but since he has been dead, his very
grave has been the witness of a miracle, if
what I have been told did really take place.
You, friend, may very possibly inform me fur-
ther on this matter.

First

First Israelite. What have you been told?

Second Israelite. For some time both before and since Elisha's death, I was upon a journey to Beersheba, and returning, learned that lately, when the Moabites invaded Israel, certain of the army were about to bury a dead soldier; when the enemy advancing, they ran off; but cast the body, as they fled, into Elisha's sepulchre, when, on a sudden, as I hear, no sooner had the carcase touched the prophet's bones, than it revived. Was such a wonder in reality performed?

First Israelite. It was so; for these eyes of mine beheld it.

Second Israelite. Nay, I should not have suspected its reality. The miracles he did while living, should have made this worthy of belief. Well, peace be with his ashes. It was surely in his power, when Joash stamped upon the ground three times, and then gave over, to have let him know how many times he should have stamped; but yet, he did not: We must therefore prudently refrain from charging him with the omission. At the worst, our most inveterate is dead. I mean Benhadad's father; and our armies have recovered all the cities he before took from us.—I am going to the temple.

First Israelite. Say you so. I will accompany you then.

CCLXXXI.

2 KINGS xiv. TO xviii.

FURTHER HISTORY OF JUDAH, AND CONCLUSION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.*

BEFORE CHRIST BETWEEN 825 AND 721.

TWO years after the transaction mentioned in our last, died Joash, having set upon the throne of Israel sixteen years, and leaving Jeroboam in his place, the second of that name. Of Jeroboam, and the king of Judah, with a line

* As this article comprizes a succession of, at least, six score years; in which but few transactions are recorded, while those mentioned in the word of God are many, but which could not be digested into any order, like the rest before and after, were they even interesting; it may not be thought improper in this note to mention them; beginning from the miracle accomplished at Elisha's sepulchre, and finishing with the captivity of Israel by the king of Egypt.

First then; Jehoash, the king of Israel, took his son, the second Jeroboam, as associate with him in the throne, about the time he went to war against the Syrians; 836 years before Christ. [See 2 Kings xv. 12.]

Secondly, Amaziah, king of Judah, growing vain of having overcome the Edomites, provoked the king of Israel, Jehoash,

line of kings succeeding them, no interesting circumstances are on record. We shall therefore

to battle. Jehoash subdued and took him prisoner, broke down upwards of four hundred cubits of the wall belonging to Jerusalem, and having spoiled the palace and the temple of a mighty treasure, marched his army back triumphant to Samaria; 826 years before Christ. [See 2 Kings xiv. and 2 Chronicles xxv.]

Thirdly, Jehoash died fifteen years before the above-named Amaziah; Jeroboam reigning afterwards alone. [See 2 Kings xiv. 23.]

Fourthly, Amaziah, finding a conspiracy against him at Jerusalem, fled hastily to Lachish, and was there assassinated. After Amaziah, came his son Uzziah, or Azariah, in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam; 810 years before Christ. [See 2 Kings xiv. and 2 Chronicles xxv.]—About this time lived sundry famous prophets, such as Joel and Isaiah, in Judah; and Jonah, Hoshea, and Amos, in Israel.

Fifthly, Jeroboam, king of Israel, in whose reign that kingdom gained its highest pitch of fame and reputation, died, 784 years before Christ. Soon after his decease, fell every thing into confusion, and the kingdom was a scene of anarchy, which lasted upwards of eleven years. [See 2 Kings xiv. 29.]—Zachariah, Jeroboam's son, and last of Jehu's race, as was foretold, succeeded in his father's place; but reigned no more than half a year, for Shallum, son of Jabeesh, murdered him in sight of all the people. On his death, succeeded those deplorable calamities predicted by the prophet Amos. [See 2 Kings xv. 8. and Amos vii.]

Sixthly, Shallum's reign was only one month long; for Menahem, the son of Gadi, murdered him; and in his struggles to obtain the kingdom, ripped up every pregnant woman in the towns that would not openly espouse his party. Menahem, while labouring thus for empire, was attacked by Pul, the king
of

fore pass them over, or as much as is related from the seventeenth verse of the fourteenth chapter

of Syria, or Assyria; but a thousand silver talents being given him, he desisted, and left Menahem to rule in peace, who did not die till ten years after; namely 761 years before Christ. [See 2 Kings xv. 14. 19.]

Seventhly, Pekahiah followed Menahem his father, when Uzziah had possessed the throne of Judah fifty years: he reigned two years, when he was murdered by a captain of his troops, named Pekah, who, becoming king, reigned twenty years.

Eighthly, Seven hundred and fifty-eight years before Christ, Uzziah died: he was succeeded by his son named Jotham; and this last reigned sixteen years: he died 742 years before Christ. And under him, together with his son, and next successor, Micah and Hoshea executed their prophetic offices. The prophet Nahum also lived about this period; and foretold the laying waste of Nineveh.

Ninthly, On the death of Jotham, Ahaz, as his son, succeeded in the seventeenth year of Pekah, king of Israel; and in that same year, this last conspired with Rezin, king of Syria, to lay waste the realm of Judah. God, however, by his prophet, as is mentioned in the seventh chapter of Isaiah, sent a gracious message to king Ahaz, with a promise of deliverance, for a sign of which (when Ahaz, not believing the veracity of what was said, and being counselled to require a sign, refused), God gave him what is called the promise of Immanuel, to be born in future of a virgin. So that, when the king of Israel, in alliance with the king of Syria, came and girt Jerusalem, they were repulsed and beaten off. But Ahaz was no sooner thus delivered from his enemies, than he forsook God's worship, and incurred idolatry. God, therefore, gave him up into the king of Israel's hands, who slaughtered six score thousand of the men of Judah in one day, and carried off two hundred thousand

- captives;

ter of the second book of Kings, to the seventeenth verse of the eighteenth chapter of the same book. From these three chapters, we shall only take as much as is sufficient to inform our readers in what order the succeeding kings began their several reigns.

In Judah, after Amaziah, who was murdered by his subjects, *Azariah, then but sixteen

captives; but these last, he was prevailed on, in the sequel, to release from bondage, and send home. [See 2 Kings xvi.]

Tenthly, Twenty years, or very near that period, were by this time passed, since Pekah, king of Israel, had assumed the government (first murdering Pekahiah), when himself was murdered by Hoshea, son of Elah, who, in consequence, obtained the throne. Ten years ensuing this, king Shalmaneser brought an army from Assyria, and reduced Hoshea to a state of vassalage. This last event fell out 728 years before Christ. [See 2 Kings xv. and xvii.] And two years afterwards, the king of Judah, namely Ahaz, died, to whom his son, entitled the good Hezekiah, was successor. He destroyed idolatry, and prospered during his whole reign, which lasted nine and twenty years. [See 2 Kings xviii.] Three years after this, Hoshea, who was under tribute to king Shalmaneser, would have shaken off his yoke, and sought to fortify himself by an alliance with the king of Egypt. But king Shalmaneser hastened to besiege Samaria, and in three years' time, that is to say, 721 years before the birth of Christ, took it, and made captives of the Israelites, whom he took with him to Assyria: and thus, as has been said already, did the realm of Israel come to its conclusion.

* It was in the reign of this Azariah, that Jonas of Gath-hepher, a town belonging to the tribe of Zebulun, in Galilee
of

teen years of age, succeeded to the throne. His reign was fifty-two years long ; and in the end he died a leper. Jotham, Azariah's son, was then made king, and reigned not more than sixteen years. His son, named Ahaz, followed. Ahaz proved a wicked prince, and was succeeded by his son called Hezekiah, in whose fourteenth year Sennacherib came up against his fenced cities, but was wrought on to desist, in consequence of tribute paid him.

We shall now say something with regard to Israel. Jeroboam was the king we spoke of last. He reigned no less than one and forty years, did what was evil in the sight of the Almighty, nor departed from his name sake's sins. His son, called Zachariah, was his successor. This Zachariah was the fourth and last of Jehu's generation, and the prophecy concerning Jehu was fulfilled ; for Zachariah, reigning wickedly, was put to death by Shal-lum, who maintained his ill got royalty no longer than a month, when Menahem, the son of Gadi, murdered him. This Menahem ruled wickedly, and kept his seat ten years. Upon

of the Gentiles, was sent to Nineveh, the capital, that is to say, chief city of Assyria. The particulars relating to his mission, which could not be here inserted, constitute the two succeeding articles.

his

his death, his son, called Pekahiah, took the government. He likewise was a wicked prince, and after having reigned two years, was slain by Pekah, who succeeded him, and governed twenty years, but no less wickedly than Pekahiah.

In the reign of Pekah, the Assyrian king dismembered Israel, taking many cities from him, the inhabitants of which he carried with him captive to Assyria. Pekah, after this, was put to death by Hoshea, whose wickedness was greater than his predecessor's. In his reign, Samaria was besieged; and being taken, its relentless victor carried off the people with him to Assyria, where he made them slaves; nor yet was this the worst; for in the city of Samaria set up a mixture of religions.

With this information we shall close the present article, first intimating, that here finishes the kingdom of Israel, which had stood two hundred and fifty-four years divided from the kingdom of Judah, and that this fell out seven hundred and twenty-one years before the birth of Christ.

CCLXXXII.

JONAH i.

JONAH THROWN INTO THE SEA.

SCENE, *On Board a Vessel.**The MASTER and TWO SEAMEN.*

MASTER.

ALL, all, alas, is lost! the vessel cannot live.

First Seaman. We have thrown every thing we could lay hold of overboard, provision, wares, and articles of commerce. Nothing in comparison of life is sweet.

Second Seaman. Do all the gods conspire for our destruction! See, what billows! They will certainly break over us, and we shall sink at once. Why did we sail from Joppa?

The Master. Was there any reason why we should not? This tremendous storm could not have been expected; for at this time of the year these seas are always calm.

First Seaman. Yes, I have been a mariner these thirty years, and much accustomed to these parts: but never saw the like till now. What will become of us?

Second

Second Seaman. Look, there is still some hope remaining: for the billows, we supposed would sink us, have just broke. Come, courage, for the gods can save us yet.

First Seaman. It is the gods that send this storm to punish the iniquity of some one in the vessel; and if so, how can we hope it will be calm again, till the offender is discovered.

The Master. Hear me, if the storm will let you. Could you fail to notice the strange look, and manner of that passenger who came on board us just as we were weighing anchor; and since that, his no less strange behaviour? I, for my part, wondered at it. He walked to and fro, with folded arms in this wise, durst not, as I thought, look up, and, on the whole, gave signs of great uneasiness within him.

Second Seaman. Yes, I likewise noticed this behaviour in him: but where is he now?

First Seaman. Below; and, what will still surprize you, fast asleep.

The Master. Asleep in so much danger! There must be some mystery about the man; and we may think this tempest visits us on his account. At least, go either of you down, and rouse him, so that he may tell us who he is, and what can be the reason of his conduct.

Second

Second Seaman. That will I: the preservation of the vessel may depend on what we do at present.—(*He goes out.*)

The Master. I remarked him frequently before the storm began. His conduct and behaviour then seemed unaccountable, and I should certainly have questioned him, if other matters had not taken up my thoughts.

First Seaman. And then to fall asleep, when we are in such trouble! He must be disturbed in mind, at least, if he have not committed any villainy.

The Master. That we shall be informed of quickly, if the storm but spare us.

First Seaman. Ha! I see him coming up. My partner has awaked him, and will have us satisfy ourselves.

Enter JONAH from below with the SECOND SEAMAN.

Second Seaman. Here I have brought him up, that he may answer for himself. He was not sleeping, but had turned away his face from every one that might approach his hammock. I drew near it, pushed him, and cried out: “What mean you, fellow? Rise and call upon your God, that he may hear and save us.” And no sooner had I hailed him in this manner,

manner, than he turned about, and with a melancholy countenance desired I would conduct him whither the ship's company were got together in their danger, having something, as he said, to tell them. I complied with his request, and thus instead of asking any further question, have thought fit to bring him hither.

The Master. He seems stupid. Tell us, if you can, good friend, on whose account is raised this tempest, which has so much frightened the ship's company, that they are trembling in the hold. First therefore, of what occupation, and what country are you? Speak.

Jonah. Yes, I will do so; and by such means make atonement, if I can, for having brought you into so much danger.

The Master. So then you suppose yourself the gods are visiting our vessel for the sins you have committed: but go on. You have begun to make confession. Let us therefore hear the rest.

Jonah. Thus is it. I was born a Hebrew, and my countrymen considered me a prophet. Very lately, there came to me in a dream, the word of that Divinity I worship, saying: "Son of Amittai, rise and go to Nineveh, that famous city of Assyria, and cry out against it; for the rumour of their wickedness has reached

“reached me.” This was the commandment I received; but I was fearful of the consequences, should I go to Nineveh on such a business; therefore came I down to Joppa, and——

First Seaman. Be quick and finish, for the tempest——

Jonah. Oh! fear nothing: you are safe. It is for me the tempest rises, and through me it will be quickly calm again. To Joppa, as already I have told you, I came down, enquiring out a vessel bound to Tarshish, that thereby I might avoid the presence of the Lord. For this he is incensed, and therefore has this storm been raised against you.

Second Seaman. Why have you done so? Unhappy as you are, that by your own confession have brought evil on us. What then shall we do, that, as you say, the water may be calm again.

Jonah. Fit question put to one, who wishes like myself for death, since I have grievously offended God, by disobeying his commandment; and the punishment I am already made to undergo, is that of being weary of my life. For this, I went below, and while you thought me sleeping, did but turn away my face, that I might pray for death, and sink together

together with the ship, in which I had endeavoured to elude the presence of my God: but it is just I should, in my own person only, suffer, and not bring down death upon so many with me, that are guiltless of my sin. Quick then, and throw me overboard; when you shall find the calm return again. This is the way God tells me I must make atonement for my sin, by saving you from death.

The Master. Your God is very bounteous to inspire you with such thoughts! But though the storm still rages, we will make yet one more effort by hard rowing to reach land.

Jonah. No, no. My life is not worth such a risque; for I am weary of it. Do then with me as I mentioned, or the storm will overwhelm you; and not only I, but every one on board the vessel perish.

The Master. Though your sin be very grievous, you atone in such a manner for it, that your God must certainly forgive it. What a God must *he* be, that at such a moment can inspire you with so bountiful a thought. He will not punish us, if we comply with your request, since, as you know, in malice we do nothing, but to save ourselves from death.

Jonah. No, no. Once more, by doing as I wish, you will deliver me from an existence
which

which is worse than dying. Bear me to the stern, and without further talk, commit me to the deep.

The Master. If it *must* be so, we consent.

Jonah. Come then; for why should I be dragged to execution, when I long to meet it. — (*As he is going out*). God of my forefathers, pardon my rebellion, and have mercy on me. — (*He goes out followed by the First Seaman*).

Second Seaman. He is gone: we are not guilty of his death. But think you, Master, every thing is just as he informed us.

The Master. How can I think any thing? That he should wish for death, and lead the way himself to execution, seems, however, strange! Hark! I believe the business is dispatched, and they have tossed him over.

Second Seaman. So too, I imagine; for methought I heard the dashing of the water, as when something is flung in: but sure the wind already is subsided. Can it be, that what he promised should so quickly follow?

The Master. But what means your partner, who comes running in so great a hurry to us? Well?

Re-enter the FIRST SEAMAN.

First Seaman. The wind has sunk away: but that is not the only wonder. Come and see the
the

the whale, that when we threw the prophet over, swallowed him, and now is playing his unwieldy gambols round the vessel. Come, or you may lose the fight.

The Master. A whale!

Second Seaman. And swallow up the prophet!

First Seaman. Yes; but come; as possibly the fish may leave us.

The Master. What a wonder!

CCLXXXIII. CCLXXXIV. CCLXXXV.

JONAH ii. iii. iv.

JONAH SAVED: HIS DISCONTENT,
AND GOD'S REPROOF THEREOF.

SCENE. *A booth without the walls of Nineveh.*

JONAH and a NINEVITE.

JONAH.

YOU say you wondered at my character; that God would for my sake preserve your city, and came therefore hither to converse with such a holy man: but in the interval, you little know how short I fall of holiness, or rather, how much I deserve the appellation of a wicked

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man;

man ; for would you think it, I was grieved, that after having warned your countrymen of the approaching desolation, God thought fit to spare you. “ They will now,” said I, “ account me a false prophet, since my prophecy concerning Nineveh is not come true. Judge, therefore, if for any sanctity of mine, your city has been saved from devastation.”

The Ninevite. Is it possible ?

Jonah. But God has let me understand the horror of my wickedness, and by a way my eye could notice. I have been myself preserved from drowning by the strangest of all means ; and yet it hurt my mind, when Nineveh was saved, because I had foretold its ruin. My whole life has been a chain of miracles, proclaiming the Almighty’s clemency : and yet, I was displeased when Nineveh became the object of it.

The Ninevite. Who could have believed as much ?

Jonah. Grant me your ear, while I go over the whole story of my disobedience. I endeavoured to evade God’s first commandment, when he sent me to denounce destruction upon Nineveh ; for after he had bid me seek your city, I embarked at Joppa, in a vessel bound to Tarshish, thinking I should there be safe from his pursuit ;

purſuit: but, in our way, a tempeſt roſe, which ſo affected me, by reaſon of my diſobedience, that my life became a burthen, and I wiſhed to die. The mariners remarked my ſtrange demeanour; and, imagining the tempeſt was upon them for ſome guilt I had committed, aſked me of what occupation and what country I might be? I told them of my ſin, and ended with aſſurances, that if they flung me overboard into the ſea, it would be calm again. They were at length perſuaded to do ſo, that thoſe on board the veſſel might be ſafe. Judge then, if you are able, of my ſituation at that moment. I had bid adieu to life, when God procured a whale—

The Ninevite. A whale! for what?

Jonah. You wonder! but the ſtory is moſt true. To ſwallow me, the moment I was plunged into the water; ſo that from the ſhip, I paſſed into the belly of the fiſh, and was ſhut up within it three whole days.

The Ninevite. Are you in earneſt?

Jonah. What I ſay, I tell you in God's ſight.

The Ninevite. But could you breathe in ſuch a cloſe confinement?

Jonah. The Almighty willed I ſhould do ſo; and every thing is poſſible with him. Nay more; not only could I breathe, but had tran-

quillity of mind sufficient to pursue the work of that repentance I had happily begun on ship-board; and my prayer I can remember was as follows: "From the belly, as it were, of hell, I call, and thou, O God, wilt hear my voice; for notwithstanding I am cast into the deep, yet will I think in such a situation of thy holy temple. Oceans compass me about: the depths close round me. I go lower than the bottom of the mountains, yet I know thou canst, if thou thinkest proper, bring my life up from corruption: therefore in this grave, where I am buried thus alive, will I perform my sacrifices." In these words, and others like them, did I pour my soul out in God's presence.

The Ninevite. You had certainly great cause for prayer in such an awful situation; after which, I need not ask if God vouchsafed it.

Jonah. No; for as already I have told you, three days after having thus been swallowed up, the fish proceeding with me to the coast, that, as I found, lay nearest Nineveh, rejected me, like something odious to his stomach, so that I was thrown upon dry land.

The Ninevite. Delivered thus from death! Oh what a miracle!

Jonah. A miracle indeed: but let me tell the rest.

rest. Soon after this deliverance, I was ordered, for the second time, to go and prophesy destruction to your city. You may easily conceive I was obedient. I set out, and having got within the walls, cried out, as I was bid by God: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be entirely overthrown." You knew the event of this prediction, sooner than I could; for having uttered the denunciation, I considered it would be unsafe to stay among you. Therefore came I hither, and contrived to make myself this booth, that I might sit beneath the shadow of it, and take note what would become of Nineveh.

The Ninevite. God's clemency be praised; that the event and the prediction did not suit each other. We believed the word of God; put sackcloth on, proclaimed a fast, and by the king's commandment ceased from wickedness, in hope that God would turn away his anger. In the end he did so, and our city, notwithstanding the tremendous message uttered by your lips, has been preserved.

Jonah. Aye, there was the occasion of that sin, by which I aggravated my first disobedience. I denounced the desolation of your city, and your city afterward was spared. On this account I could not hide my indignation. I

was angry, and presumed to argue or expostulate with God. “Yea, Lord,” said I, “did I not think it would be so? When I was in my native country, thou enjoinedst me to prophesy destruction upon Nineveh; *but after I have done so, thou wilt spare the place, said I, even then; for thou art gracious, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repentest thee of evil. What then will the people think, when after I have prophesied their ruin, no such ruin comes to pass? They will consider me a lying prophet.* Thus debated I the matter with myself before I ventured to take shipping, and evade the task imposed upon me, by escaping in the Tarshish vessel: but I could not. Being saved from drowning, I submitted to thy will, and prophesied the ruin of the Ninevites. They have been spared, and now will think me a deceiver. Wherefore, I beseech thee, take away my life: for rather would I die, than be the ridicule and scorn of every Ninevite.” In this wise did I venture to expostulate with God.

The Ninevite. And did he answer you?

Jonah. Yes, truly, did he, friend; and now, am I to shew how he proceeded to point out the greatness of that sin I had presumed to perpetrate,

perpetrate, and likewise point it out in such a manner, that my eye, as I have said already, might take notice of it. You must therefore know, that several days preceding your repentance, and while yet the destination of your city was a doubtful matter, God had raised me up a gourd (here may you see it, though quite withered, and laid flat upon the ground), that it might give me shadow from the heat: but in the night that followed my expostulation, God prepared a worm, which, when the morning rose, I found had preyed upon the gourd; for it was then dried up entirely as you see.

The Ninevite. I do so: But to what does all this tend?

Jonah. That you are now to hear. When I observed it thus laid flat, I grieved; but in the sequel, did much more than grieve: my heart was filled with indignation: for, that very morning, when the sun was up, it seemed more sultry than before, and scorched my head in such a manner, that I fainted, and again, as I had done beforehand, wished to die. God saw the indignation kindled in me by the loss of my beloved gourd, and thereupon addressed me, saying: "Dost thou well to vent thy anger in
" this manner, for the gourd?" "Yes, truly," answered I, and utterly forgetting in whose presence I was speaking, added: "I will vent

“ my anger for it even with my latest breath.”

Wherein, said God, and his reply, which was no less my teacher than the words are worthy of remembrance by the Ninevites, ran thus:

“ Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which

“ thou never labouredst, neither madst it grow,

“ which sprung up likewise in the period of a

“ night, and perished in the period of a night.

“ And should not I spare Nineveh, whereon

“ are more than six score thousand people, that

“ can hardly tell their right hand from their

“ left, together with much cattle?”

The Ninevite. And did God say this?

Jonah. He did; and thus concludes the whole I had to tell you. Go in therefore with me now, and let us at our leisure talk these matters over, till the day shut in. We shall have ample room, both of us, to praise God; I, for his pardon deigned me, notwithstanding my rebellion to his will; and you, for the deliverance of your city from the ruin which he menaced it should undergo.

The Ninevite. I wish for nothing more than such a conversation. Go then you into the booth, and I will follow

CCLXXXVI.

2 KINGS xviii.

SENNACHERIB'S MESSAGE TO HEZEKIAH.

BEFORE CHRIST 710.

SCENE. HEZEKIAH'S *Palace at Jerusalem.*

HEZEKIAH and ELIAKIM.

HEZEKIAH.

FROM Lachish, say you?

Eliakim. Yes, my lord, from Lachish; whither you dispatched the gold and silver that bought off this never to be satisfied Sennacherib from laying waste the towns of Judah. Scarce had he obtained possession of these treasures, but the sight of so much wealth rekindled his ambition; and, determining, one should imagine, never to forego demanding, while he fancies you have any thing to give, has he dispatched Rabshakeh, Rabсарis and Tartan with a mighty host against Jerusalem, who are at present on their march; and in the interval, he sends you this insulting message.—

Hezekiah. The insatiate robber? And what is it?

C 5

Eliakim.

Eliakim. It was told me by Rabshakeh, not an hour ago ; and still, methinks, it tingles in my ear. Thus said Rabshakeh. " To your master, says the great Sennacherib : *What confidence is this you trust in, seeing you have sent me such a slender tribute to prevent the mischiefs I shall otherwise inflict upon your cities. To suppose I shall be satisfied therewith, is just the same as saying : You have strength and counsel for the war : On whom then do you trust ? On Egypt ; or perhaps, as you will say, upon the Lord.*" Thus far Rabshakeh spoke ; and used our language, when I said, that those assembled round me might not understand his vaunting ; speak, let me intreat you, in the Syrian language ; for I understand it ? but Rabshakeh saw my drift, in making this request, and answered me in anger, saying : " Hath my master sent me then to speak in such or such a language as you dictate ? No : " then, turning to the people with me, he continued : " Listen every one of you to what the king my master says, on this occasion. *Let not Hezekiah so delude you, as to fill your mind with notions, that the Lord will save you from the hand, which, in my rage, I am preparing to lift up against you : but be prudent : dread my fury, and increase the tri-*

bute

*"bute sent me, if you wish to live in peace; and
"hearken not to Hezekiah, when he saith, the
"Lord will by his power deliver us. Hath he
"delivered Israel and Samaria from Benhadad?
"Nay, have any of the gods preserved the country
"round about them, either from Benhadad, or
"myself? Who therefore is the Lord, that he
"should save Jerusalem from being mine?"* Thus
spake Rabshakeh; and then bade me make my
lord acquainted with his message.

Hezekiah. Did Sennacherib say this?

Eliakim. As nearly, word for word, as I can
recollect.

Hezekiah. Go, bring the son of Amoz hither.
Lose no time.

Eliakim. Isaiah, do you mean, my lord? the
man of God?

Hezekiah. The same. Take also with you
Shebna, and the elders of the priests, arrayed
in sackcloth. Quick, and meet me in the tem-
ple, whither I will instantly repair, and hold
communion with the Lord. Delay not, but
away.

Eliakim. I go, my lord.

CCLXXXVII. CCLXXXVIII.

2 KINGS xix.

SENNACHERIB'S LETTER TO HEZEKIAH, AND ISAIAH'S ANSWER.

BEFORE CHRIST 710.

SCENE. *The Temple at Jerusalem.*HEZEKIAH (*with a paper*).

THE ambition of Sennacherib will not permit him to take rest; but here, does he insult me with a letter, in addition to his message by Rabshakeh. Let me read it once again; for is it possible that he can speak so blasphemously of the living God! (*Reading*). “ Let
 “ not the power on whom you trust for safety
 “ and support, deceive you, Hezekiah, saying:
 “ *Your Jerusalem shall never be in my possession.*
 “ You have heard whatever the Assyrian kings
 “ have hitherto performed, by blotting out so
 “ many countries, and shall you then be delivered?
 “ Have the gods of any land my father
 “ fought with, saved it; such as Gozan, Haran,
 “ Rezeph, and the Telefsarians? What
 “ availed against me the endeavours of the king
 “ of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, or even
 “ Ivah?

“ Ivah? Think on this then, and transmit the
 “ tribute I lay claim to, or withhold it as your
 “ wisdom counfels.” And with this he ends
 his letter. Whom in my necessity can I resort
 to, saving God?—(*He goes to the altar, and
 kneels down before it*). Hear then my prayer,
 O Lord, whose dwelling is between the che-
 rubims: thou art the only God of all the king-
 doms of the world. Thou hast made heaven
 and earth. Bow down thine ear, and listen to
 me. Open, Lord, thine eyes, and see me.
 Hear too the insulting language of Sennacherib,
 who hath reproached even thee, the living God.
 True is it, that the monarchs of Assyria have
 destroyed the nations, with their lands, and
 cast their gods into the fire, since in reality they
 were not gods, but fashioned by men’s fingers
 out of wood and stone. Now therefore, I be-
 seech thee, save us, Lord, from our invaders,
 that the kingdoms of the earth may know thou
 art their sovereign, and none else:—But I am
 interrupted.—Oh Eliakim!—(*To Eliakim coming
 in*). You could not have returned more op-
 portunely. Have you seen Isaiah? and if so,
 what hope does he afford you?

Eliakim. Every hope, my lord; and sends
 this message to excuse his absence at your bid-
 ding, since he could not come just now. You
 sent

sent me to complain of one rapacity in this insatiate enemy to Judah ; but Ifaiah tells you, he will speedily give instance of another, added to it, and dispatch a letter, iterating his demands of tribute made upon you by Rabshakeh, and in terms not less injurious to God's holy nature than his message.

Hezekiah. Did Ifaiah say thus much ? Now know I of a truth, that God inspires what that just man attests at all times ; for already is that letter come, Eliakim. Yes, here, I have it in my hand, and find its tenour no less blasphemous and wicked, than the prophet has foretold it would be.

Eliakim. Is it possible Ifaiah's prophecy should be so soon accomplished ?

Hezekiah. Yes, Eliakim. And therefore, I shall place the greater confidence in those assurances of hope you bring me from him. Speak then, and inform me what he said in answer to my humble message.

Eliakim (giving a paper). Read it in this paper here, which he has sent my lord.

Hezekiah. So long an answer ! How impatiently I wish to know it ! (*Reading*). “ Let
“ the king of Judah know, that this is
“ my reply, instead of coming to him ; and
“ that what I tell him is established on the
“ truth

" truth of God, who speedily will make
 " the very women that abide in Zion scorn
 " Sennacherib ; for whom has he blasphemed ?
 " The holy one of Israel. By his messengers,
 " he has reproached the Lord, and said : *With*
 " *chariots out of number, am I come to over-run*
 " *the mountains, even Lebanon itself, whose cedar*
 " *trees I will cut down.* Such mischief, verily,
 " has he performed in many nations ; but not
 " dreamt the while he was no other than an
 " engine in God's hand to lay fenced cities thus
 " in ruin. The inhabitants of those fenced
 " cities, therefore, were of small account.
 " They were dismayed, and like a field of
 " blasted corn, before the time of harvest. But
 " God knows the abode of this Sennacherib,
 " this enemy to Judah. His outgoing and in-
 " coming are not hid from him, whose eye
 " sees every thing ; nor yet his rage, of which
 " he shall repent, when in his nose God puts
 " a hook, and in his mouth a bridle, and so
 " leads him back the way he came. He shall
 " not therefore enter, as he boasts he will,
 " into Jerusalem, or shoot an arrow there, or
 " cast up so much as a bank against it. By
 " the way he came he shall assuredly return,
 " since God, for his own sake and David's, will
 " preserve a city, which he loves to make his
 " dwelling."—

"dwelling."—This then is Ifaiah's answer. Praised be God's mercy for it. My sad heart is eased, and I rely upon the prophecy. The Lord will not forsake his people, and Sennacherib shall find it so.—But who is this, and why does he approach with such a hasty step? So should they come, methinks, who bring great news.

Shebna (coming in). Oh, my good Lord! What words shall I make use of, to deliver the important tidings I come charged withal.—Sennacherib:—

Hezekiah. Speak! What of him? What of Sennacherib?

Shebna.—Hath broken up his camp, when on the point of marching hither; and was yesterday returning home with the remainder of his host.

Hezekiah. With the remainder of his host! What can have thinned it then?

Shebna. A wonderous miracle. No earlier than two nights ago, while every quarter of his camp was hushed in silence, after a whole day's carousal at the thought that speedily their master would obtain possession of Jerusalem and Judah, did the angel of the Lord descend, and smite a hundred fourscore and five thousand men, who, when the sun arose, were all dead bodies.

bodies. They had not a moment's time allowed to know what hand was on them. Their destruction was wrought out in silence, so that the remainder, when they woke, and saw the slaughter of the night, were seized with consternation, and not waiting their commander's orders, separated from each other, and are now all going home.

Hezekiah. Great God!

Eliakim. Thrice favoured prophet, to whose knowledge God communicates in this wise future things.

Shebna. My news astonishes; and yet I have not told the whole.

Hezekiah. Does any thing remain then of like happy sort?

Shebna. There does, O king; for after the first march, Sennacherib, unconscious of the power that had thus thinned his host, prepared a sacrifice to deprecate the wrath of Nisroc; and while worshipping before the stupid god, his sons Adrammelech and Sharrezer stole on him with the sword, and, though their father, put him to a cruel death. Such was the miserable fortune of the greatest enemy Jerusalem would otherwise have ever had.

Hezekiah. Prepare the sacrifice, and since the God of Israel hath vouchsafed us so much
mercy,

mercy, let us supplicate him to continue his protection, and preserve the people he hath chosen to himself. Lead on.

CCLXXXIX. TO CCXCIV.

TOBIT i. ii

*TOBIT'S CHARITY; HIS FLIGHT FROM NINEVEH, WITH HIS RETURN: HIS CHARITY RENEWED; THE GRIEVOUS PUNISHMENT HE UNDERWENT, AND THE REVILINGS OF HIS WIFE.

SCENE. *A poor man's lodging room.*

TOBIT (*blind*).

SURE, in the whole tribe of Napthali, though they have all departed from the living God to worship Baal, there is no one

* The time in which this Tobit lived, may be collected from the twenty-first verse of the first chapter of his book, in the Apocrypha, where it is written: "And there passed not five " and fifty days before two of his sons killed him," (that is killed Sennacherib), whose murder is recorded in the Articles preceding; so that Tobit's life, &c. does not come in here improperly.

so completely miserable as myself. Let me reflect upon my whole life past ; for what, in my dark situation, can I do, but think ? From Napthali in Galilee, I came a captive hither. Till that wretched exile, which beset our tribes, though I was very young, I constantly went up at every feast time to Jerusalem, as was enjoined my brethren by an everlasting ordinance. I constantly went up, and carried with me the just tenth of my increase, to give the sons of Aaron, while another I bestowed in charity, as Deborah, my father's mother, on her death-bed, had commanded me, because I was an orphan at that time, and had no father to direct my youth. Things prospered with me then, and therefore I resolved to marry. Anna, of my kindred, was the woman upon whom I placed my choice ; and at the proper time, I had a son, to whom I gave the fir-name of Tobias. Miserable wife ! That marriage made you the companion of my sorrows, and the innocent Tobias, cheated of his birth-right, must mourn with you ; for as yet, he was not ten years old when our unhappy tribes were all brought hither captives. Enemassar then reigned king in Nineveh, and he, apprized that while my brethren eat of Gentile food, I would not imitate their ways, because I thought
of

of God with all my heart, was minded to alleviate my want of all things, with an office in his court. In this employment I amassed ten silver talents, which I lent one Gabael, of Rages, in the land of Media, saying to myself: "He is an honest man, and if my fortune should be changed, he will supply me in my need." With this resource against the time of want, I shewed my gratitude to God, by much alms-giving to my brethren, and by bread held out to feed the hungry, in which exercises I was happy, and would often say, that God had spread a table for me in the desert. But alas! this happiness did not, by any means, last long; for Enemassar died, to whom Sennacherib, his son, succeeded, a remorseless tyrant, who was used to murder his unhappy captives, just as if it had been sport, and leave them publicly exposed for every passenger to gaze at: but of those so murdered, much the greater part were people of my nation. I took pity on them; and, at midnight, going forth, withdrew their bodies from the open thoroughfare, and buried them. Of course, they were not to be found when sought for in the morning. This enraged Sennacherib, and he denounced the utmost vengeance upon those, that, by their charity, thus counteracted his inhuman cruelty,

cruelty, if they should ever be discovered. I regarded not his menace, but pursued my nightly work, concealing, while the sun was absent, those atrocious murders it had seen inflicted on the children of my people. It pleased God, however, that at last my practices should be discovered; and the issue proved, that with my wife and son, I was obliged to fly from Nineveh, escaping, through God's bounteousness, with life indeed, but owing to my fear of apprehension, having had no time to carry off our household goods, or other substance, which was all laid hold of for the state. In this condition, needy, and without even bread to eat, I might have long remained an exile, and with those I was not known to, but that God determined otherwise. Sennacherib's two sons soon afterward unnaturally joining to depose and put to death their father, we had licence to revisit Nineveh, through the intreaty of my brother's son, who, happily for me, was in Sarchedonus's favour; and Sarchedonus has now obtained the throne. Here, therefore, once again am I at Nineveh, but not, as formerly, possessed of what I had to live on. That is irretrievably confiscated; and yet, in such a situation, being known, and having friends, who, in their charity, from time to time, assist me,

I have

I have been in some sort happy, and should be still so, but for this great calamity, this blindness. Oh great God! how much affliction will not my dear partner suffer, when returning, she is told what accident has happened since the time she left me, which was only yesterday just after sun rise. Heart tormenting thought! On her account, I mean, much rather than my own; for I have learned, thank heaven! to bear misfortunes: but alas! she has not brought her mind as yet to trust in God as much as is her duty. Therefore am I not without some fear of her reproaches, when she hears my story, and observes the dismal situation I am brought to. I must bear, however, those reproaches, as I hope I shall this state of darkness, with a patient spirit; for her tauntings are among those trials God ordains me. They originate, indeed, from her affection, and that circumstance is not without its comforts; for, in truth, she would not so much rate me for the consequence of my mistaking charity, as frequently she calls it, if she did not so much love me. Near about this time she promised to return; and lo! I think, I hear her. Yes, I am so much accustomed to her tread, that I should know it from a thousand. She is here. —(*To Anna coming in*). Oh Anna! Anna!

Anna.

Anna. Would to God, dear husband, I had not possessed the faculty of hearing; for what dismal story has Tobias told me. Oh great God! Could I have thought my husband would, in such a state, receive me. Miserable day! Oh heaven, have mercy on me!

Tobit. On us both! for we have both been grievous sinners, and we merit every punishment that possibly can be entailed upon us.

Anna. But alas! if we are sinful, is not every human being so? Why then are others less severely treated? I would fain persuade myself that every thing about me is a dream.

Tobit. Not so, dear partner; every thing, alas! is but too true.

Anna. Yes, yes, I must not doubt it: but alas! since yesterday at sun rise, how can such a circumstance have happened. I am utterly confounded at the thought, and would have asked Tobias how the accident was caused: but he is melted into tears, and could but just inform me what a horrible misfortune you had met with.

Tobit. Horrible indeed! poor youth!

Anna. I went out yesterday, quite happy to consider I should have so large a sum of money to receive from *that* rich family, who give me needle-work to do; and even entered our abode
with

with joy, remembering with what kindness they had entertained me, and so liberally paid my labour, when I left them. Yes, dear husband, I was happy in these thoughts; and all at once, to have my senses utterly distracted with this sight! Imagine what were my ideas; but yet tell me how it happened, if the pain you feel will let you.

Tobit. Pain! dear wife. I feel no pain: but listen, while I tell you the whole story, which, indeed, is but a short one. This is, as you know, the feast of Pentecost.

Anna. It is, dear husband.

Tobit. Well; you had not left the dwelling yesterday one hour, when that good woman, to whose bounty we are both such debtors, sent me information of a comfortable meal she was preparing for me. Shortly afterward, it came, and with Tobias I sat down to eat: But seeing the abundance thus bestowed upon me, I be-thought myself, and bade Tobias go out instantly into the street, that he might bring in with him any needy person of our brethren, who feared God. "Go son," said I, "and "lo! till you come back I will not touch a morsel."

Anna. And he went, as you directed?

Tobit. He did so: but speedily returned, and,
weeping,

weeping, told me that an Israelite had just before been strangled, and was lying in the market place.

Anna. I guess, alas, some part of what must follow.

Tobit. You may well do so, dear Anna; for before I touched my dinner, I got up, went out, and brought the body hither till the sun should be gone down.

Anna. Yes, I imagined it would be so.

Tobit. Having made safe disposition of it in our chamber over head, I washed myself, and eat my meal in heaviness, reflecting on the prophecy of Amos, where he says, “*Your feasts shall turn to mourning, and “ your mirth to lamentation.” Therefore I wept sore; and when the sun was down went out, and having made a grave, interred the body. In performing it, I could not but attract observers, who laughed at me.

Anna. And with reason, saying (I can easily imagine), “ Has not this strange man learned “ wisdom yet from his misfortunes, having fled “ before from Nineveh for such an act; but “ he must needs thus play the idiot, and commit the very crime again, for which already “ he was like to suffer death.”

VOL. III.

David ginsard Tobit.

* Amos viii. 10.

Tobit. Oh wife, in works of charity one cannot play the idiot. But to end my story: It was nearly midnight, when, the burial being over, I returned, and slept upon the ground, close by my court-yard wall, because I was polluted. I fell fast asleep; my face unfortunately being upward, and uncovered.

Anna. I begin to guess what you will tell me.

Tobit. I could not imagine there were swallows in the wall: but so it was, that while I slept, and, as you know, I have unhappily a custom, lying with my eyes half open, they discharged their dung upon them, and the consequence was what you see; for they were covered with a film, and I grew blind; not gradually so, but all at once.

Anna. Alas! alas! but we must ask advice of some physician.

Tobit. His advice would be of no assistance to me. I feel something that induces such a thought, and which is strengthened by the circumstance of being free from any of the pain which, one would naturally think, the loss of such a precious sense must unavoidably occasion. But what noise was that? Methinks I heard the bleating of a kid.

Anna. You did so, husband; and the kid is of my bringing hither.

Tobit.

Tobit. Of your bringing hither! and where, Anna, did you get it? God forbid you should have secretly purloined it, to provide us with a dinner. If you have done so, restore it to the owner. We are not permitted to eat any thing that has dishonestly been come by.

Anna. What a man you are! that, in this grievous situation, you can think of such a matter: but the truth is, that the kid has not been secretly purloined, but given me as a present over and above the wages I received for working.

Tobit. Were it so, how charitable must these people be to pity our distresses in this manner. God be praised for all things!

Anna. Praised for all things! for a kid! for such a trifle! You see mountains where are only mole-hills.

Tobit. What, dear wife? Would you deprive me of the joy I feel on this occasion, though it be but for a trifle as you call it? If it comforts me in my affliction to imagine that in any manner the Almighty visits me with blessings, do not rob me of that comfort. Be it of God's goodness that this kid is now within our habitation: but I dread, indeed, dear Anna, lest the fear of poverty should have prevailed upon you to become dishonest.

Anna. Patience! patience! But Tobias is alone, and weeping. I will go, that I may comfort him, and not stay here to be accused, in such a manner, of injustice: And by whom? by one whom, notwithstanding my affection, I must charge with having been unjust to those dependant on him; to his wife, with that unhappy son of hers, who, after being born to an inheritance, will live and die in want. Yea verily by one, whose charity has robbed us of our rights, and whose best actions favour of imprudence. Witness those ten talents you deposited with Gabael at Rages, so far off, that you can never hope to have them back again. Had they been placed with any person nearer Nineveh, they would be now a great relief in our distress.

Tobit. I left them at so great a distance, knowing Gabael is honest, and, whenever called on, will restore them. In a year or so, Tobias will be old enough to undertake this journey; and then, Anna,—

Anna. Yes, and then indeed.—But in the interval, if heaven does not relieve us, what are we to do?—You have disposed of much in alms among the needy, and done many righteous deeds; but will they now procure us bread?—Oh heaven! Oh heaven! Let me find comfort

fort from my son, if he has any for me. (*She goes out*).

Tobit. She is gone; and I may weep and pray. O Lord, thou art for ever just, and all thy ways are truth and mercy. Punish not hereafter any of my sins and ignorances, or the wickedness committed by my fathers; for they would not pay obedience to thy will, and therefore didst thou give them up to be a spoil and proverb of reproach to every nation in whose lands we are dispersed; and since, in this world, I am brought to so much sorrow, let my spirit soon be taken from me, that the body which contains it may return to dust; for it is better I should die than live in so much anguish. Take me, therefore, from this world, O God, and lodge me in the bosom of thy mercy.

.CCXCV. CCXCVI.

TOBIT iii. iv. v.

TOBIT'S MESSAGE BY HIS SON TO
MEDIA, FOR THE MONEY HE HAD
LENT; AND THE DEPARTURE OF
TOBIAS WITH AN ANGEL.

SCENE *continues.*

TOBIT (*entering*).

I HAVE prayed for death; and though, if
heaven vouchsafe my prayer, I shall not
want the good things of this world, yet how
are my dear wife and son to live? I am deter-
mined therefore, and will send Tobias for the
money Gabael has of mine in his possession.
God, I trust, will save him in the journey; and
my state is such, that he must run some risque
of danger, rather than be left quite destitute,
when I am in the grave. Suppose then he is
gone. In that case, am I sure I shall survive
so long as till the day of his return? Con-
sidering, therefore, the worst circumstances that
can happen, he is coming here by my di-
rection to receive, what may be the last words
I am to utter in this world; though, on the
other

other hand, I must support his spirits with the prospect of a safe return to my embrace. He has accordingly already finished with his mother, and is now approaching. — (*To Tobias coming in*). Dear Tobias, we must all at length be parted: Grieve not, therefore, if, in opposition to all likelihood, you should not find me living at the time of your return. I say, in opposition to all likelihood; for who can look into futurity, and say what shall or shall not happen? You have always been a virtuous youth; and, therefore, with the greater pleasure, do I utter the advice I am about imparting, since I know it will be dutifully followed. — Listen, therefore, to the end, and do not interrupt me. I have told you, son, that notwithstanding all my expectation of still living longer, I may die; but should I, you must needs return before my burial. If, indeed, I should give up the ghost while you are absent, or if heaven preserve me, so that we again may meet with one another, in that case, whenever I depart, inter me decently, and see that you despise not your afflicted mother; but consider her with deference, and do nothing that may grieve her spirit; for remember what great sorrow she went through, to give you being.

Honour and respect her, therefore, while she lives; and bury her, when dead, close by me: let my grave be her's.

Tobias. Oh father!

Tobit. Listen, but reply not. Such shall be the duteous part you owe a mother, that has always so affectionately loved you: but much more than all, remember your Creator, and transgress not his commandments. Act uprightly; for, provided you are just in all your dealings, they will prosper; be not tardy to give alms; let not your eye be envious; neither turn away from any of the poor, and God, in that case, shall not turn away from you. If you have much, give much; if little, give accordingly, for charity delivers men from death. Shun whoredom, dear Tobias, and whenever you may marry, marry no strange woman; for God's people are the children of the prophets, who all married wives of their own kindred, and were happy in their offspring, since they peaceably inherited the land.

Tobias. I know they did, dear father.

Tobit. Furthermore, if you have work-men, let not their just wages tarry with you, but take care to pay them out of hand. Be circumspect in every thing you do, and wise in all your conversation. Do to no man what
you

you would not have another do to you. Abstain from wine, before it make you drunk. Pour out your bread upon the burial of the just; that is to say, though you are sure, it will not be repaid you; but give nothing to the wicked, even were you certified he would return it ten-fold. Bless the Lord your God, and pray him to direct your ways; for every nation hath not counsel, but the Lord bestoweth all good things, and in the way he chuses, humbleth whom he will. Remember, therefore, these my exhortations, and consider not that your afflicted father, after having done himself as he advises you to do, is poor, for I have store of profitable wealth, and so too will you have, if only you fear God, and keep from every kind of sin. This is the counsel my affection has to give you.

Tobias. I receive it as the gift of your affection, father; and pray heartily for grace, that I may keep it.

Tobit. You say well, my son; and now let us apply our thoughts to make fit preparation for this journey; for meet is it, you should instantly set out. You never were in Media, and much less know any thing of Rages, or my debtor there: but, at the market place, if you go thither, you may meet with some one, who

for money will conduct you to that country. Go then, and return as soon as you have found one.

Tobias. At the market place, dear father?

Tobit. Yes, close by ; where numbers are at all times waiting to be hired, and get employment ; so that you are sure of not returning unprovided, and particularly if you promise largely, which you may do without fear ; for Gabael, I am sure, will let you have the talents. Go then : in an hour or two, you will have done this business, till which time I am impatient, and will wait your coming back, within.

Tobias (going out). I go, dear father.

Tobit. Thus has the afflicting thought of parting with my son lost half its anguish. Till he comes, I will employ myself in searching for the paper Gabael gave me, when I placed this money in his hand. Alas ! when last of all I laid it by, I was not careful to dispose thereof in such a place as blindness might find out ; for I had then my eye sight, and was far from dreaming such a great calamity would happen to me. I shall know it by the seal, however, which was very large, and therefore do not need assistance, which, if otherwise, my Anna would afford me : but the father chuses

to be absent at our separation, and even now is weeping in her room. Poor woman!—(*He goes out feeling his way*).

Tobias (*quickly after entering with the angel Raphael, but disguised*). I have so soon dispatched my business, that I thought to find my father where I left him: but since then, it seems, he is withdrawn: perhaps to get the writing we have need of, or make other preparation for our journey. Stay then here, good friend, a little, while I go and bring him hither.

Raphael. Make no ceremony, I will wait your leisure.

Tobias. He will wonder, I am certain, when he finds how soon I have succeeded in my search.—(*He goes out*).

Raphael. He would not be astonished, if he knew that God, in approbation of his virtue, has dispatched me from above to be his son's conductor. Bear then yet a little longer thy calamity, poor blind old man, when succour will be held thee out; and not that only, but thy poverty will be removed, and wealth pour in upon thee, through a marriage, such as neither thou, nor yet thy son, at present, think of. I anticipate the joy he will experience, when, as soon as this miraculous event is come to pass, I tell him I am Raphael, and was sent by God.

to order every thing in his behalf. Nor will he only be delivered from the misery oppressing him, but that unhappy damsel likewise, whom Tobias is to marry.—She too will be saved from the enchantment that for such a length of time has been upon her. What affliction in the dwelling of her parents! and how lamentable her own fortune! God, however, has attended to her supplication, and the evil spirit's influence on her will be quickly at an end; for even at the very instant Tobit was enduring the reproaches of his wife for being virtuous, was this sufferer undergoing the revilings of her father's maids, because she had been married to seven husbands, whom the fiend destroyed before their several wedding nights were over. “You forget, it seems,” said they, “you have unmercifully strangled, or by other methods put to death, so many husbands. Wherefore do you beat us then on their account, although the fit indeed be on you, which is no excuse to us, that feel the fury of your arms. If they are dead, go follow them yourself, and never let us hear of you or them.” Such were their tauntings which she heard, and at her lucid intervals was so affected when she thought thereon, as to conceive the crime of suicide. “But no,” said she
upon

upon reflection, " my dear father has no other
 " child, and if I do this act, I shall bring
 " down his age with sorrow to the grave." In
 her distraction, turning towards the window,
 did she kneel, and pray as follows: " Oh my
 " Lord and God, thou art for ever righteous:
 " honourable is thy name, and holy; there-
 " fore let thy works all praise thee. Lo, I lift
 " my eyes up to thy habitation, and implore
 " thou wouldst remove me from this state of
 " being, that no longer I may hear the false-
 " hoods heaped upon me. Lord, thou knowest
 " how pure I am from every kind of sin with
 " men, and never, in this land of my cap-
 " tivity, have I defiled my name, or that of
 " any in my family. My father has no child
 " to be his heir, nor any kinsman;" *but in*
that she was mistaken, " for whose sake I may
 " reserve myself to be his wife. My seven
 " ill-fated husbands are all dead; and why, in
 " such a situation, should I live? Thy will,
 " however, and not mine, be done. Yet, if
 " it please thee still to have me live, let slan-
 " derers take compassion on me, and suppress
 " the tales of their reproach."—Thus prayed
 the damsel, and her prayers, as well as Tobit's,
 are vouchsafed already: but no more; for I
 behold the poor blind man approaching.

Enter

Enter TOBIT and TOBIAS.

Raphael. Peace and consolation, friend, be with you, and with all good men.

Tobit. It is a pious wish, and you deliver it with such a tone of voice, that though I have no eyes, I can believe my son's description of your courtesy. Thanks be to God for putting you into his path, when he went forth to seek some person that might guide him on the way to Media. He has told you, I believe, the occasion of his going thither?

Raphael. Yes; and may God grant that these ten talents, which you stand in need of, may be paid on our arrival.

Tobit. You have been in Media?

Raphael. Yes, in every province of that kingdom; and know Rages well.

Tobit. How fortunate! I could have wished, however, you had known the family of Gabael.

Raphael. I do know it, and the house of Raguel likewise.

Tobit. Raguel of Ecbatana?

Raphael. The same.

Tobit. Why Raguel is my kinsman. Am I waking? You said well, Tobias, when you told me I should like the youth you had encountered. Some among our brethren have had angels to conduct them, and unless I might have

have hoped for such a one to be the guide of my Tobias, I could never have desired a better than the one he has procured himself, and whom, I cannot but imagine, God has of his special favour sent us. But how comes it, good young man, you are so well acquainted with these people? Of what tribe and family may you yourself be? I should first of all have asked this question, to discover how far you were worthy of the trust I mean you: for, though poor, yet is my son's well-being precious to me, and men's fair professions, you will own, are frequently deceitful. Tell me, therefore, of what parentage you are, that I may know how far I ought to trust you.

Raphael. I am Azarias, son of Ananias, who, before our transplantation hither (such is the unstable nature of all wealth) was called the *Great*. Yes, you may wonder, but that Ananias was my father.

Tobit. Azarias, son of Ananias! We are kinsfolk then!

Raphael. We kinsfolk!

Tobit. Yes: You tell me I may wonder. Can I be sufficiently astonished! Who, Tobias, have you brought me! God went surely with you to find out the guide you wanted, and has put my kinsman in your way.

Tobias.

Tobias. Let me then praise God's goodness for the meeting. And are *you*, indeed, my father's kinsman? You are mine then, and shall be still nearer than a common kinsman. You shall be my brother.

Tobit. Guide me, dear Tobias. I would fain embrace the brother you have thus adopted, and who consequently is my son. Yes, Azarias, if a poor blind man's adoption can bestead you, take it, yet you rather should adopt *me* as a father; for the blessing has proceeded first of all from you. I am the party benefited, who have happily secured, in such a guide, the safety of my child.

Tobias. Did I not rightly tell you, father, I was fortunate in having met with such an one to travel with me; and *that* likewise, being scarcely passed the threshold?

Tobit. Yes, Tobias: and God's hand must certainly have brought you thus together; for indeed, had I been told to wish you such a partner as you wanted, it would certainly have been the son of Ananias, though I never saw or heard of Azarias. Yes, good youth, you are descended from a worthy stock; for Ananias I knew well, and Jonathan your uncle, sons of that Samaia, who was famous in his time before our transplantation hither; for we
always

always went with one another to Jerusalem, that we might worship, with the first-born of our cattle, and tenth part of all our fruits: nor were these virtuous men seduced, when our whole tribe fell off from God. Yes, once more, Azarias, you are of a worthy stock: but I forget, Tobias: It is time you should set out upon this journey. Tell me, therefore, worthy youth, what wages shall I pay you? Will a drachma daily, and such necessary things as I can give Tobias, be sufficient? Speak.

Raphael. It will. I would not take a poor man's money for my service, but, believe me, I am poor myself.

Tobias. No doubt, no doubt. It is the common fortune of our tribe; but you are rich, if God has but endowed you with his grace. These drachmas (*giving him money*), I deliver to you in advance. Take them, and bless God's goodness for me, that the charity of people, for whose family my wife does needlework, has made me the possessor of so much. On your return, I will discharge the rest; for I am sure, you will not come from Gabael, empty handed; and moreover, I will add considerably to the wages I shall give you.

Raphael. Thanks for such a generous promise, which, on my part, I will study to deserve.

serve. Come, then; for I am ready. Have you any thing to say besides?

Tobit. But little. Here, Tobias, is the writing Gabael gave me: and by which he specifies the trust committed to him. Take it, and set out. God prosper you, and send his angel, though unseen, to be your safeguard.

Tobias. Must I leave you, and my dear, dear mother then? God, for her sake particularly, will, I hope, vouchsafe me a safe journey and return.

Tobit. He will: and I was just now comforting your mother with this hope; for she had got into her room, where, when I entered, she began: "Dear husband, do not send away
 "our son, although the object of his journey
 "be so necessary to our life; for is he not the
 "staff we lean upon, in coming in and going out
 "before us? Yesterday, I could not keep from
 "chiding you for having left so great a sum
 "of money in the hands of one so distant;
 "but, at present," added she, "that you re-
 "solve, at every risque, to send Tobias for it,
 "I retract; and fain would keep him with
 "us. Let him stay then, husband; for the
 "Lord will never let me want for work, that
 "we may live; and should not that suffice
 "me?" Thus, Tobias, spoke your mother,

when

when I answered, saying: "Take no care, dear wife; he will return in safety, and your eyes shall see him; for good angels will accompany his footsteps." She was comforted by this assurance, and has left off shedding tears; but will not see you. Her affectionate farewell comes to you through my lips, and through my lips shall your reply be made, that you desire her prayers, and by God's blessing will return to her embrace, with all the expedition of a son spurred on by love and duty. Shall I not say this?

Tobias. Yes, father.

Tobit. Farewell then at once, Tobias; and farewell good youth. Speak not, but leave me. We have both our hearts too full for utterance.

Raphael. Come, good friend. It will be better so. (*Drawing him away*). Yea, verily, much better. (*They both go out*).

Tobit (remaining). They are gone, and as my ear distinguished by his friskings up and down, the dog too with them. Faithful creature! your affection charms me! you have not deserted us in our necessity. You might have staid with me however. Blind as I am now, your company would have amused me: but no matter; I will feel my way out to the room
where

where my afflicted wife has hid herself,—with tidings that the dismal parting scene is over.

CCXCVII.

TOBIT vi.

THE MIRACLE OF THE FISH.

SCENE. *The open country.*

RAPHAEL.

THUS far have we advanced in safety on our way, and shall to-morrow reach Ecbatana, where I design to take up our abode at Raguel's house, that the commands of God may be obeyed. We are at present on the borders of the Tigris, and may pass away the night, which quickly will shut in upon us, without changing place. Tobias is apprized thereof, and has but quitted me to wash away the labours of his journey. It was God that put him on it; and, at present, is the work of his Omnipotence proceeding. Good! He is returning with intelligence of what I know has come to pass.—*(To Tobias running in).* Well, dear Tobias, what has happened? You seem frightened.

Tobias. Do I, brother? If I do, it is not without reason, I assure you.

Raphael.

Raphael. But once more, inform me what has happened?

Tobias. You shall hear. As just now I was walking by the river, and examining what part was best to bathe in, of a sudden an unwieldy fish came floundering towards the bank, where I was at that moment, looking round about; and springing forward to the spot, would instantly have fastened on me, but that fortunately I had time to turn, and save myself.

Raphael. You are mistaken. It designed not to attack you, but was only in pursuit of some less fish, and in its eagerness to seize the booty, came too far on shore. But has he got again into the water? or where is he?

Tobias. Still, for any thing I know, upon the bank.

Raphael. But why, even granting he intended to attack you, why, Tobias, did you run away, when he had missed his aim? A fish, however bulky, when once got upon dry land, can do no mischief. You might safely have staid there till he had beat himself against the bank to death.

Tobias. I might have done so, truly: but the suddenness with which he sprung upon me, took away my understanding for the moment; and I knew not what I did, much less then what I should have done.

Raphael.

Raphael (aside). Another link in that great chain of miracles, which the Almighty is at present operating in his favour!—(*To Tobias*). It was likely that so sudden an affair should somewhat terrify you; but, since now, you must be sensible the danger is all over, take my knife. Go quickly back, and as no doubt the fish is dead by this time, cut it open, and take out the heart, the liver, and gall-bladder. Ask not why I give you these directions, but obey me. I could tell you what I have in contemplation, but the time will not permit it, since the fish may still be living, and get off, if you continue talking. Should you find him living, in that case, while he is struggling, strike him with my staff upon the head (*here take it*), and assuredly you will dispatch him. Go then, and cut off besides a portion of the flesh. It will afford us a refreshing supper in our present situation. In the mean time, I will make a fire to broil it.

Tobias. Come, I will be guided, brother, by you: but should like to know your reasons.

Raphael. You shall know at supper. Only go you instantly,—and hear me: After you have cut the fish's heart out with the rest, let them be put up safely. Go.—(*After Tobias is gone out*). Till he return, I have to make a fire;
and

and luckily there seems to be no want of wood for such a purpose. These dry leaves and branches will do admirably well.—There (*bringing together a quantity of leaves and wood*), now I have enough: but how am I to light this fuel? Every traveller knows that. Rub these dry sticks against each other, and the fire will soon come forth; for God's good blessings always are at hand: the gifts of fortune, empty as they are, need looking for.—I have it, and need only fan the flame up with my cap.—(*He pulls his cap off, and begins to fan the fire*). He will have quickly finished, and be back again. Right, here he comes.

Tobias (coming in again). It was, indeed, no mighty matter to despoil my enemy; and yet, however quickly I have done my business, you are got beyond me in your diligence, by making such a noble fire. Here is the heart and so forth; and this other is to sup on.

Raphael. Lay it on the embers; and while dressing we may talk of twenty different matters.

Tobias. In the first place, then, dear Azarias, tell me to what purpose have I got this heart, this liver, and gall-bladder?

Raphael. I am now content to tell you. The gall-bladder then, is excellent to rub a blind man's eyes; for smear them with it, and
that

that moment he will see again as clearly as before he lost his eye sight.

Tobias. Is it possible! my father then,—

Raphael. Of that hereafter: let us talk, at present, of the heart and liver; but before I tell you to what use I mean they shall be put, know first, Tobias, that to-morrow evening I design to lodge at Raguel's dwelling in Ec-batana.

Tobias. At Raguel's; and why not, dear brother, go directly on to Rages?

Raphael. Hear me: Raguel is your father's cousin, having but one child, and she a daughter. Raguel has much wealth. The Lord hath put a thought into my head, that Raguel's riches may remove your father's poverty, if we should fail of Gabael's money, when we claim it. I will, therefore, speak to Raguel, that he give you Sara for a wife, for Sara is his daughter's name.

Tobias. Me! Sara for a wife! Are you in jest or earnest?

Raphael. Never in my life was I more serious. The idea comes to me from God. I pity your unhappy father's fortune, and would fain repair it.

Tobias. Yes, but—

Raphael. And to you, does Sara, I may say, belong;

belong; since you are joined already to her with respect to kindred; and the maid is fair and prudent. Hear me, therefore; I will speak to-morrow in your favour to this Raguel; for to-morrow we shall reach his dwelling; and as soon as we return from Rages, we will celebrate the wedding.—

Tobias. But, dear Azarias,—

Raphael. Hear what I would tell you further; for I know that Raguel cannot marry her to any other, and observe the law of Moses. But our fish I see is broiled, and we may eat it now. Look, here is bread. (*Taking bread out of his wallet.*) Take some of both, and now;—But what! your little dog expects his portion of the supper. Let me feed him.—Grateful creature! He has been the partner of our toil, and should be likewise of our pleasures,—There.—Eat, eat; and now, while we refresh ourselves, say what you were about to tell me?

Tobias. Yes, dear brother, I will do so; for it was not from my fear of proving finally a disappointed suitor, that I wanted to thrust in a word; but I have heard that Sara hath already been bestowed in marriage on seven husbands, who all died before the wedding-night was over. Now, you know I am my father's only child. Have I not cause to fear then, that supposing

I should woo and wed her, I shall fare as they have done before me, and in that case, far from bettering my afflicted father's fortunes, I shall bring both him and my unhappy mother to the grave with greater sorrow, when they think, as they are travelling on to death, that they have no one left them to perform the last sad duties of their burial.

Raphael. Once more, hear me, whilst I do away these fears. Your father must have cautioned you against the wickedness of marrying any foreign woman. Has he not, Tobias?

Tobias. He has so, dear brother, and his last instructions were to such a purpose.

Raphael. I was sure of that, he is so good a man! Well, brother, only think on your side of obedience, and regard not the infirmity of Sara; for to-morrow, as already I have said, shall she be yours; and when you come into the marriage chamber, you shall take the ashes of such perfume as is burning in it, and mix up therewith a portion of the fish's heart and liver, which thus lately you have got. The smell thereof shall be so hateful to the evil spirit vexing Sara, as to put him to immediate flight, and he shall never think of coming back again. But, when you enter her apartment, fall down both of you, and pray
to

to the Almighty, who is merciful, and will have pity on you. Be not fearful ; for, in truth, she came into the world that she might be your partner. And so far from dying by her love, you will approve yourself the happy means of ending the enchantment under which she labours ; after which, she shall accompany your steps to Nineveh, and bear you children.

Tobias. Do you mean so, Azarias ? But what reason can I have to question your sincerity ? In every thing, since our first meeting, have I found you an extraordinary man ; and therefore I rely upon a favourable issue to your counsel, with respect to Sara, inasmuch that now I long to see her ; for such strong possession of my bosom has the maid obtained already, owing to the warmth of your description, that with truth I can assert I love her.

Raphael. What then if we go to rest, our supper being done. One thing, however, I had very near forgot. By no means let your bride have intimation of the means in your possession to restore her ; so shall her acceptance of you be a token of her love, and not a sign of her consent to marry with a view of being cured. This caution treasure in your memory ; and so saying, once more let us go to rest. The wood hard by will give us shelter, while we

sleep ; but if we could not have recourse to any shelter, so serene and placid is the air, we should not need one. Come, we will contrive to make us up a bed, some way or other, with the leaves of which there is such plenty round about, and then pursue our journey early in the morning.

Tobias. Go ; I follow you, dear brother.—
(*To the dog*).—Come, poor little fellow.

CCXCVIII. CCXCIX.

TOBIT vii.

TOBIAS' INTERVIEW WITH RAGUEL'S FAMILY, AND SARAH'S MARRIAGE TO HIM.

SCENE. *A chamber in the house of Raguel at Ecbatana.*

RAGUEL (*entering hastily, and calling out*).

WIFE ! Where are you ? Edna ! Come and see what guests are sent us.

Edna (from within). In a moment husband. I am coming.

Raguel. Who would have expected such a visit ?

Edna

Edna (entering from her work). Well, dear Raguel, and what guests?

Raguel. Wait but a little, while I tell you. I was standing at the door, when up came what I thought two strangers. "Can you tell me," said the elder, "where one Raguel lives?" "Yes, stranger, he lives here," said I; and looking at the younger, had no need to add another word; for of themselves methought my arms affectionately opened to receive him. Nay, we were so soon acquainted, that we kissed each other; and such pleasure followed from this unexpected meeting, that I wept, as you may see, dear Edna, by my countenance even still.

Edna. What guest can you be thus describing? and where is he?

Raguel. At the entrance with his partner, wiping off the dust upon his sandals. I have just stepped in before, that I might mark what your astonishment would be on seeing them. And look, where they are now appearing.—(*To Raphael and Tobias entering*). In good time, dear friends. Once more, a hearty welcome! But be you quite silent, till I see if Edna will know either of you. Well. Are you at least acquainted with that face? (*Pointing to Tobias*).

Edna. How should I be acquainted with it, husband?

Raguel. Is it possible! Let me, good youth, then ask you this one question, which may probably awake her recollection.—Of what country are you?

Tobias. Of Judea formerly; but now of Nineveh, where our whole tribe are captives.

Raguel. Of the sons?—

Tobias. Of Nephthali.

Raguel. Now, Edna, will not this assist your memory? You are still as much perplexed to recollect him. Well then, what if he should call himself the son of our dear cousin Tobit?

Edna. Dull as I have been, not to discern his features, which are now, while I observe them, so familiar to me! Yes, I recollect your countenance, dear youth, at last, and welcome you.—Assuredly, I do. Embrace me, cousin; and be welcome to Ecbatana, with your companion too.—Good heaven! that the resemblance should not strike me!

Raguel. Well, enough of this astonishment. How fares my cousin, and his spouse, Tobias? Are they both alive?

Tobias. They are; but as for my poor father;—he,—

Raguel. Well, he?

Tobias. By an unhappy accident has lately lost his sight.

Raguel.

Raguel. Poor man! Alas! alas!

Edna. Quite blind?

Tobias. Quite so; and in despair of being ever cured.

Raguel. Unhappy news! I grieve to hear it. But, at least, God has permitted it, and I am sure my cousin will submit with resignation to his will. And came you to inform me of this accident?

Raphael. Let me make answer to this question, brother.—No: we are proceeding to a place called Rages, whither, as companion, I am hired to guide your kinsman; and our business is for money lent, by your unhappy cousin, to one Gabael living there.

Raguel. I know him, and you took this city in your way?

Tobias. We did, that I might see you for the first time in my life.—(*Aside*). But, Azarias, though I own it seems a little hasty, speak of what you mentioned to me in our last-night's conversation.

Raphael (aside). What! so soon?

Tobias (still aside). Yes, brother; for your praises have so thoroughly endeared the object of them to my bosom, that, believe me, I shall be unhappy till the business is dispatched. And then, my father, as you know, consumes the

weary day in blindness, while by tarrying here I cannot use the blessed medicine you have got me to restore him.

Raphael. If it must be so, Tobias, I will speak. Then hear me, Raguel; and you too (*looking upon Edna*), that have every right to be consulted in this matter. You are parents of a daughter that is marriageable. Let your cousin's son then have her; for he loves the maid, and will approve himself a proper husband to her.

Tobias. Yes, believe me, I will study——

Raguel. On this article of love, no more. Let us go in, that we may banquet, and be merry. Your arrival merits nothing less than such a welcome: but alas! respecting Sara,—

Edna. Think not of a wife, dear nephew, when our Sara's name is mentioned; for such wedlock must not be: though if it were not for one circumstance, meet would it be that you should wed her.

Raguel. Yes; but as it is, strong reasons plead against a union that would terminate so horribly; for let me tell you the whole truth, which is——

Tobias. Oh, I have heard already the whole truth; for all speak of it.

Raguel. Truly do they. Think not, therefore,

fore of her; and to drown such thoughts as disappointment might occasion, if indeed to be debarred embraces that already have, and must again, prove fatal can be disappointment, once more let us in to banquet, and make merry.

Tobias. Pardon me, dear Raguel, if I say no food shall come within my lips, till we have made agreement on this business now in hand, and sworn to one another.

Raguel. Are you serious after all; and being told the risque of such a marriage, do you still persist therein?

Edna. We would preserve you, nephew, from that risque. Why, therefore, would you draw it down upon yourself?

Tobias. I would not rush into the way of danger: but, on this occasion, I persuade myself, there will be none. Nay, something whispers to my heart, that in addition to the happiness of calling your beloved Sara mine, I shall, by the Almighty's blessing, put away her plague.

Raguel. Alas! dear nephew, would to heaven you could do that!

Edna. Yes, truly; but to entertain such hope would be a downright folly.

Tobias. Say not so: but, on the other hand,

since there is nothing but what God can do, believe me when I tell you I have strong assurance that your Sara, through his blessing, will be dispossessed of that destroying spirit, which at present rules so strongly in her, if you give consent to have her call me husband; for I marry not through any wanton wish, but to repair my father's wretched fortunes, by the dower you give me with your daughter. Think not, therefore, that with such a motive I would run to certain ruin, and deprive my parents of a life, than which they have no other consolation. Think not I would willingly provoke my death, and leave them in the world without one friend to close their eyes up, and perform those last sad rites of burial, that the dying look for at the hand of charity.

Raguel. Ah me! In that there may be something.

Edna. How are we to answer you? God in his goodness teach us.

Tobias. Brother, Azarias; they begin to yield. Speak you then for me.

Raphael. I was going to do so. Yes, friends, there is a something that persuades me every thing will prosper, if you grant Tobias's request. Your daughter's former husbands thought not of that state they entered into, as a holy thing

thing: and therefore very possibly they were cut off: but as for this young man, you see it is the wish of making some provision for his parents, that induces him to take your daughter. This pure motive, God must certainly approve of; and the days of such as honour those from whom they are descended, shall be lengthened in the land. Let this determine you, and once more give away the maid.

Raguel. In God's name let him take her then, according to the manner. What say you, dear wife?

Edna. That the Almighty's will be done. He is indeed her cousin, which not one of those who have already had her was. And therefore, very likely, were we punished, and they also, for infringing the commandment. Be it so. I give him my consent, and, in his mercy, may God bless their nuptials.

Raguel. Go then, wife, and bring her in. (*Edna leaves the room*).

Tobias. Am I so happy?

Raguel. She will soon be here. Expect, however, to behold her sorrowing, and in tears. The loss of those seven husbands she has wedded is a load upon her heart: but if God's goodness shall think proper to spare you, in that case her serenity of temper will return, and after so much grief, she will at length rejoice.

Tobias. Oh, fear not, but that God will, in his goodness, spare me. I have nothing like the fear of death before my eyes: but am encouraged, on the other hand, to hope much happiness from this alliance.—Is it she now coming?

Raguel. Yes, dear nephew. This is Sara.
Here re-enter EDNA, bringing in her daughter
 SARA.

Raguel. Weep not, daughter, in this manner. You have had seven husbands to your bed, and all unfortunate; but, as we trust, the eighth will make amends. Give me your hand, dear child. And now, Tobias, take her; for the law of Moses sanctifies your marriage. I pronounce you therefore man and wife, and may God's blessing be upon you.

Tobias (taking hold of Sara's hand). You shed tears. Are they of grief, dear maid, at the idea of this union? Heaven forbid that thought; for I will rather think they flow at the remembrance of past scenes, and, therefore, do I here profess myself prepared by that affection, which already reigns within my heart, to do away your sorrows. Yes, beloved Sara, I will shew myself the tenderest husband woman ever had.

Raguel. Enough, Tobias, for the present: she is both afflicted and confused; on which
 account,

account, and for no other reason, she replies not to your vows. She will recover quickly, if we leave her. Let us therefore take the opportunity thus furnished of withdrawing to a chamber by ourselves, where we may write an instrument of covenants, and seal it in the presence of your friend.

Tobias. With all my heart; for every thing, of which my Sara is the object, cannot but be welcome to my soul. Come, Azarias; for the sooner we dispatch this matter now in hand, the sooner shall I see my Sara's face again.

Raguel. That will be after supper.—(*Raguel, Raphael, and Tobias all go out*).

Sara (*remaining with her mother*). He has left the room; and now, may I unburthen my full heart. Oh mother, mother!

Edna. Vent not your complainings here, but go with me, dear child, into the next apartment, where at night you are to meet your spouse. There, previously, will I inform you touching every thing you ought to know concerning him. I was myself afflicted till this day; but his arrival at our habitation has dispelled my grief; and after I have told you all, your grief, I trust, will likewise be dispelled as mine is. Be of comfort, therefore, and come in.

CCC.

TOBIT viii.

SARA'S DISINCHANTMENT.

SCENE. *A garden.*RAGUEL (*with a spade*).

I HAVE, as usual, made a grave to bury this unfortunate young man, if he be now no more. Last night, I was in hopes that God would of his mercy spare Tobias, who, if dead, has run into the pit he might have shunned; but in the darknefs, my late fears returned upon me, and I find, at present, I must give him up. Yes, yes; it is impossible, that after seven have been so miserably punished by this demon, he should spare the eighth. My wife, poor woman! hoped at first, with no less ardour than myself, that every thing, in future, would be well, and that Tobias would not undergo the fortune of all those he has succeeded; but the night has overcast her prospects; and, at day break, after having had no sleep, she told me with a sigh, which seemed to rend her heart strings, that the light shined through her curtains, only to inform me it was
time

time to rise and carry out the body of Tobias. Having had no rest myself, I needed not a monitor to tell me, that by rising, I might change the scene, and fix my troubled thoughts upon some other object. Common griefs from such an admonition might draw comfort; but alas! what dismal situation am not I reduced to, since that other object was a grave, thus to be dug up privately for one of my relations. Poor Tobias! But here comes the partner of his travels. He too has been sleepless, and is coming forth to mourn in private for the loss of his companion. He will bless my charity, at least, when he beholds the grave I have been making for him.

Raphael (coming in). Save you, bounteous host. So early stirring!

Raguel. It was highly needful I should quit the couch whereon I could not rest, and still more so, having such a dismal work to do.

Raphael. What dismal work to do? What mean you? What have you been doing with that spade? Why are you thus dejected, and why point you with your finger as you do?—What would you shew me? Ha! a grave! What means this mystery? Who is it you would bury?

Raguel.

Raguel. Who? And must Tobias be denied the charity of dust to cover his cold limbs?

Raphael. At once I understand you. I came forth to breathe the freshness of the morning, after that sound sleep which men partake of who are flourishing in health and spirits, and have nothing to disturb them in the height of their enjoyment. Judge then, if my mind has been employed, like yours, on any evil that might happen to Tobias.

Raguel. It is true, indeed, you had but one to mourn for; and that one no dearer to you than a friend; while I had by this marriage joined him to me as my son; yet sure, a friend might have possessed your thoughts for some short season after his decease. How could you sleep?

Raphael. How could you wake, and be afflicted, after that reliance you had brought yourself, last night, to place on God? What can have happened since, that could induce you to forego the merit of the trust? O Raguel! God has shewn himself a tenderer master than such fears on your part merited; for, while we now are talking of Tobias by the grave, which, doubtful of God's goodness, you designed him, by God's goodness, he has been protected, and is living.

Raguel.

Raguel. Been protected, and is living !
What ! Tobias ? Is my son-in-law alive ?

Raphael. He is ; and was not the Almighty able to preserve him from the demon's power ? O man ! whom seven such fore calamities preceeding have not yet taught resignation to God's will ; for God sends not calamities : he only suffers they shall happen for instruction to mankind. You have already lost seven sons-in-law. And why ? Because they entertained no thoughts of God, on entering with your child into that holy state of matrimony, which himself ordained before the first man's sin. Their punishment, on that account, was death, and such too would Tobias's have proved, had he incurred their sin : but he thought properly of things ; for hear me. I must own, I was not yesternight without anxiety and trouble for my friend, and therefore, after you had left him in the bride's apartment, and withdrawn, first having recommended him, indeed, to the Almighty's mercy, I myself went not to rest, but waited till the house was hushed, and then crept softly to the chamber door, where, after I had silently kept watch, but no great length of time, I heard my friend address his bride as follows : " Let us rise, dear Sara, and intreat
" that God would shew us pity." Whereupon,

as

as I could hear distinctly, both got out of bed, and kneeling down, Tobias thus poured out his supplication: "Blessed art thou, O God, and
"father of our fathers; holy be thy name for
"ever. Let heaven, earth, and all the crea-
"tures bless thee. Thou createdst Adam, and
"bestowedst Eve upon him as a wife and help
"mate; from whose loins, proceeded every
"human soul. Thou saidst, in the beginning,
"it was no way good that man should be alone,
"and therefore didst thou raise him up an
"aid—in all things his resemblance. And
"now, Lord, I take not this my Sara in an
"hour of wanton mirth, but with a view to
"godliness. Ordain then, in thy mercy, that
"together we may live in peace, and nothing
"evil hurt us." In this manner spoke Tobias;
to which Sara said, "Amen." And thus they
went to sleep; for, though I stood still listen-
ing, I heard nothing further. Think then, if
I had not reason, after this, to hope that God
would shield Tobias from the demon? I was
confident he would; and, therefore, going back
into my chamber, fell asleep, and did not wake
till after day break, when I rose, and passing
by, knocked gently at his door, that if awake,
he might reply; when I was answered from
within, so that I know my friend is living.

Raguel.

Raguel. And is all this true?

Raphael. As true as God is, in whose sight I speak it.

Raguel (running in). Edna! Wife! Where are you? Rise; for I have news that would revive the dying.

Raphael (after Raguel is gone in). He is gone to satisfy himself with such a blessed sight. I hear him, in the transport of his joy, still crying out. Good! good! He cannot chuse, but rouse the newly married couple, who with Edna, will be quickly here, a joyous company. But what will be the feelings of Tobias, when he sees this grave? As one, in truth, restored from death will he pour out his thanks to God. Yes, yes; I know he will do so. His piety will not withhold that sacrifice, which his Creator's goodness claims. But I am interrupted, and see Raguel coming back.

Raguel (returning). Every thing is just as you have said, young man. I knocked as you did, at my son-in-law's room door; and to my comfort had like answer. He is living! he is safe! and, with my wife and daughter, will come quickly hither to rejoice my eye sight, as already he has charmed my ear. O God, thou art entitled to all adoration! Let then all thy saints, and every living creature, magnify thee!

As

As for me, with the returning morning, at noon day, and every evening, will I praise thy name; for thou hast made me joyful; and that evil has not chanced, which I suspected; but, in mercy, have thy judgments been administered; for thou hast pitied two that were the only children of their parents. Still vouchsafe them further mercy then, O Lord, and let their days flow on in health and joy.—(*To Tobias, coming in with Sara and her mother*). Dear, dear Tobias! you are come in time to hear me praise God's goodness for that safety he has thus vouchsafed you from the demon's influence. See the grave I had been making. I considered you as dead already, and was minded to conceal you in the pit, lest any one should fancy that an eighth calamity, resembling the preceding seven, had happened in our family. Judge with what sorrow I got up this morning, and pursued the dismal business: but judge too, how I rejoiced, when afterward, your partner here informed me you were living.

Tobias. O dear father! mother! wife! and almost I had said divine protector! (*to Raphael*) how shall I express what transports I experience in my heart while I am speaking: but that grave—let me turn from it; for the sight comes over me with horror. No; much rather

rather let me kneel beside it, and thank God that I am living.

Raguel. We will every one of us do that.

Sara. Assuredly we will so: but I, more than all; for I am snatched from the possession of a demon, from the horror of a living death.

Edna. I am a mother; and as such, my joy at this event exceeds description; so too, therefore, should my gratitude to God.

Raphael. You are preserved, my dear Tobias: let me, therefore, mingle these embraces, with your adoration for the blessing.

Tobias. O my Azarias! O my brother! But forgive me, father, if thus early I begin to talk of my departure from Ecbatana. Conceive me not ungrateful for the gift bestowed upon me; but amid the joy now reigning in my bosom, I consider that at Nineveh my parents hearts are sad. Be, therefore, you and my dear mother willing to allow of my return.

Raguel. Not so, Tobias. Fourteen days to come, as you remember, have I sworn you shall remain beneath my roof; and you would hardly make me violate my oath. Stay, therefore, here those fourteen days; and then will I dismiss you with one half of all my substance, and a promise of the other half, when Edna and myself are both of us deceased.

Tobias.

Tobias. You are too good; and, therefore, though I feel for my unhappy father's situation, I consent to do as you desire.

Raguel. But hear me. Why not send some messenger to Rages for this money of your father's, which you told me was the object of your journey?

Tobias. Well remembered! Love, you will remark, must have impaired my recollection. I am come from Nineveh on business of much moment, which I have not looked to, and yet talk of my return. Dear Azarias, you must stand my friend; for can I so immediately give up my Sara?

Raphael. Yes, I understand you, and will go to Rages, that your love, on this occasion, may not suffer any thing from absence.

Raguel. Do, good youth; and let Tobias spend those fourteen days of joy entirely with us. Take a servant, and two camels, so shall your return be speedy. And suppose, you should bring Gabael with you. As your father's friend, Tobias, he will gladly be partaker of your joy.

Tobias. He is a worthy man, and your intention to invite him does me honour. But, dear Azarias, stay not by the way; lest, tarrying for you, we exceed those fourteen days:
for

for, as you know, my father, anxious for my safety, is at present reckoning up the hours, as they go by, and chiding their slow progress.

Raphael. Fear you nothing. I will journey thither, and return with no less speed than if my friendship lent me wings.

Tobias. Thanks, thanks, dear Azarias! Let us then go up into the house, that I may give you Gabael's surety, as a voucher in demanding back the trust.

Raphael. True: That should I have certainly forgot. Quick therefore: I could wish I had already been at Rages, and were now returned: So not another hour's delay.

CCCI. CCCII. CCCHL.

TOBIT x. xi. xii.

TOBIAS'S RETURN; HIS FATHER'S
CURE; AND REVELATION OF THE
ANGEL.

SCENE *changes to* TOBIT'S *house.*

TOBIT and ANNA.

TOBIT.

BY this time, upwards of three weeks are past since first Tobias left us; and six days would have sufficed him to perform the journey. What, alas! has happened? Is my son detained? Has his companion, Azarias, left him? Has he proved unfaithful? But that question is an insult to his goodness: Or is Gabael dead, and is there no one to deliver up the money?

Anna. Too, too well can I conjecture what has happened! My dear son is dead. And I shall now put store by nothing in the world, since he, who was the pillar of my life, is taken from me.

Tobit. Dearest wife, forbear this more than womanly complainings, to have trust in God,
and

and that good guide he sent to be our son's protector. Think not of misfortunes having happened to him, but have hope; for he is safe.

Anna. Peace, peace: he is not safe, but dead: and never more shall I eat food by day time, or take sleep by night, as cordials to relieve and comfort nature, but as nauseous medicines forced upon an ailing person who is satisfied he cannot live.

Tobit. Alas, alas! When I had no one to dispatch for Gabael's money, I was happy in comparison with what I am at present, notwithstanding my necessities: but now—

Anna (*seeing her husband's dog coming in*). Oh heaven! Oh heaven!

Tobit. What ails you, Anna, crying out in this strange manner?

Anna. Do I see him?

Tobit. See him! What our son? What mean you? Is Tobias here?

Anna. No, but the dog! the dog!

Tobit. The dog, what ours?

Anna. Yes, husband, he is coming in. Ha! now he makes directly up to you.

Tobit (*feeling him*). It is our dog indeed! his master, therefore, cannot be far off. Now, Anna, where are your late fears?

Anna. But think you, he is certainly at hand?

Tobit. He must be.

Anna (running out). I delay too long. Let me rush forth to meet him on the way. Oh what an unexpected blessing! O my son! my son! my son!

Tobit. Stay, stay, dear wife: let me go with you. If Tobias be, indeed, approaching, would you have him think I love him less.—But she is gone: her motherly affection cannot bring itself to suit a poor blind man's slow step. In God's name let her go; if he be really approaching, he will speedily be here. But is it possible? — (*Feeling for the dog and fondling him*). Poor thing! Let me once more be satisfied.—Yes, yes; it is our dog. I cannot be deceived. I am too well acquainted with the faithful animal to take another for him; and he knows me better, than to throw away on any one, except his master, so much love. These twistings of his little frame, and these caresses all speak for me. Rest, dear little fellow, I have got you in my arms, and every thing is well, except, indeed, that I want eyes to follow Anna.—Hark! for surely, I hear some one coming in.

Enter ANNA running in before TOBIAS.

Anna. Here, here he is! our son, dear Tobit, he is here!

Tobit.

Tobit (*rising and attempting to come forward*). Here! where? Speak, speak, my son; that notwithstanding blindness, I may rush into your arms. (*He tumbles in his haste*).

Tobias. Ha! he is falling!—O my father! I endeavoured to say something; but my feelings would not let me, and will hardly even now. I stretch not forth my hands at present, as no doubt you think I ought, to lift you from the ground: but pardon me till you know all. (*Taking a bottle out of his pocket*).

Tobit. What mean you?

Anna. Let me help your father up.

Tobias. No, no, dear mother. I design myself that filial office: but an office still more filial must be first performed.—(*Aside*). Now, Azarias, heaven vouchsafe no less a blessing on this medicine than the last.

Tobit. Once more, dear son, what mean you?

Anna. Are you well?

Tobias. Speak not, but be of hope.—Thank God, that I have eyes to do my present charitable office. (*He smears his father's eye lids with the fish's gall.*)

Tobit. Wherefore do you put me to such pain? (*rubbing his eyes*). Ha! what means this? What is it, I feel, falling from my eyes?

Tobit. He must be.

Anna (running out). I delay too long. Let me rush forth to meet him on the way. Oh what an unexpected blessing! O my son! my son! my son!

Tobit. Stay, stay, dear wife: let me go with you. If Tobias be, indeed, approaching, would you have him think I love him less.—But she is gone: her motherly affection cannot bring itself to suit a poor blind man's slow step. In God's name let her go; if he be really approaching, he will speedily be here. But is it possible? — (*Feeling for the dog and fondling him*). Poor thing! Let me once more be satisfied.—Yes, yes; it is our dog. I cannot be deceived. I am too well acquainted with the faithful animal to take another for him; and he knows me better, than to throw away on any one, except his master, so much love. These twistings of his little frame, and these caresses all speak for me. Rest, dear little fellow, I have got you in my arms, and every thing is well, except, indeed, that I want eyes to follow Anna.—Hark! for surely, I hear some one coming in.

Enter ANNA running in before TOBIAS.

Anna. Here, here he is! our son, dear Tobit, he is here!

Tobit.

Tobit (*rising and attempting to come forward*). Here! where? Speak, speak, my son; that notwithstanding blindness, I may rush into your arms. (*He tumbles in his haste*).

Tobias. Ha! he is falling!—O my father! I endeavoured to say something; but my feelings would not let me, and will hardly even now. I stretch not forth my hands at present, as no doubt you think I ought, to lift you from the ground: but pardon me till you know all. (*Taking a bottle out of his pocket*).

Tobit. What mean you?

Anna. Let me help your father up.

Tobias. No, no, dear mother. I design myself that filial office: but an office still more filial must be first performed.—(*Aside*). Now, Azarias, heaven vouchsafe no less a blessing on this medicine than the last.

Tobit. Once more, dear son, what mean you?

Anna. Are you well?

Tobias. Speak not, but be of hope.—Thank God, that I have eyes to do my present charitable office. (*He smears his father's eye lids with the fish's gall*.)

Tobit. Wherefore do you put me to such pain? (*rubbing his eyes*). Ha! what means this? What is it, I feel, falling from my eyes?

Tobias. Scales, father ; I can see them ; and the sight emboldens me to think I shall not lose my hope.

Tobit. Oh heaven ! oh heaven ! oh heaven ! The blessed light ! I see it once again ! Oh Anna ; Anna !

Anna. What dear husband ! do you see ?

Tobit. Yes, perfectly.

Tobias. Thank God, the medicine then has done its part ; and Azariah is the same physician here in Nineveh, as at Ecbatana : but pardon me, dear father. You are lying still upon the ground. Give me your hand, and let me lift you up. Oh father !

Tobit. Oh my son ! what can have happened ?

Tobias. Every thing ; and Azarias is the cause. Had heaven dispatched its angel to conduct my steps, no greater blessings surely could have happened to me. Briefly let me mention what has come to pass : but if the tale excites astonishment within you, do not interrupt me, either you or my good mother, but reserve all comment for a time when we are agitated less than we must be at present. We left Nineveh, and gained next day the Tigris, on whose bank we lodged among the trees. A fish was cast upon the shore. By Azarias's advice, I cut it open,

open, and took out the liver, heart, and gall, which last has been the means of giving you new sight ; for Azarias bade me use it in the manner I have just now done. We went not straight to Rages, but proceeded towards Ecbatana ; and there took up our lodging at our cousin Raguel's house. That Raguel had a daughter, whom, by Azarias's kind office, I have married ; for in all things has he shewn himself my benefactor : But that daughter was unhappily enchanted by the Evil one. The fish's heart and liver cured her of that plague, as did the gall your blindness ; so that I bring home large store of wealth, even half good Raguel's substance, as a dowry with his daughter, and the money Gabael had ; for he hath paid us likewise, and all this to solace the remainder of your days. Rejoice then, and not only you, dear father, in the restoration of heaven's light to your benighted sense, but you, dear mother, likewise, that the evening of your life will now go down in peace.

Tobit. Oh happy moment, that thus literally speaking I have lived to see ! and oh thrice blessed ! thrice gracious Azarias ! — I forbear all comment on the kindness he has shewn you by the way. Let me, however, ask you where he is at present ; and where, likewise, you have left your bride ?

Tobias. See, father, where, to save me a reply, they come. My great impatience spurred me on before to see you and be blessed.

Enter RAPHAEL bringing SARA in.

Tobias. Approach, dear Sara. This is my for ever honoured father, and this too, my mother not less so.

Tobit. My joy abounds in such a manner that I cannot speak. Be welcome, notwithstanding, to a poor man's roof, and spare me, at the present moment of my happiness, all further speech. Tears quite choke up my utterance. The Power, however, that has blessed me, knows my heart, and will not look for any fluency of words. O God! be thy great name, and all thy holy angels blessed; for thou hast scourged, but yet had pity on me in the end, since I behold my son Tobias. I behold a daughter likewise, in the spouse thou hast bestowed upon him. Once more then be welcome, and may God be ten times blessed for having brought you hither; and blessed too, be both your parents: But to you, good Azarias, that have put such gladness into sorrowing hearts, what shall I say? See first, however, dear Tobias, that his wages be delivered him. We must be in the first place just; and generosity may follow. You have now good store
of

of money. Let him, therefore, have his due ; and not *that* only, but much more.

Anna. Assuredly ; for he has unexpectedly built up the fabric of our fortune. Give him, therefore, more, much more than justice, in her balance, might weigh out.

Tobias. Oh father ! and oh mother ! he deserves no less than half of every thing I have received ; for he hath safely brought me back to Nineveh, removed my wife's deplorable disorder, and restored your sight, dear father.

Tobit. He hath verily done this. Come hither, therefore, friend. I bless you in God's name ; but you are poor, and blessings only will not furnish you with food. Take, therefore, half the sum which, through your blessed mediation we enjoy, and go away in peace.

Raphael. Hear every one of you, while I say something ; for the words are, in reality, not mine. Bless God, and praise him for the wonders he hath wrought in your behalf, and sight of all that live. Good is it to praise God ; and honourable is it likewise to proclaim his works. Prayer is acceptable to God, with righteousness : yea better is a little, righteously obtained, than much, unrighteously amassed. And better is it to give alms, than lay up gold ; for they shall save the charitable man from
F 4
death,

death, and purge away his sin. But they who dare persist in sin are enemies to their own life.

Tobit. Who is it that speaks thus?

Raphael. Assuredly, I will keep nothing from you; for to treasure up kings' secrets faithfully is prudence; but most glorious should created beings think it to reveal the works of God. Hear, therefore, what shall follow with still greater heed.—When you, Tobias, and you, Sara, prayed, though in such distant places, I presented the remembrance of your supplications made on earth, before the Holy One: And when you, Tobit, did not hesitate to leave your meat, that you might go and cover up the dead, then I was with you. It was God that sent me to heal Sara, and remove your blindness. Yes, good Tobit, it was God. Speak not, however, but adore the Deity in silence, as I do, and *all* the heavenly host. The heavenly host I say; for I am Raphael.—

Tobit. O great God! (*preparing to fall down and worship*).

Raphael. Kneel not; but let your spirit bend before him, rather than your body; for this attitude may be induced by fear, while the prostration of man's spirit, in God's presence, is the worship he is pleased with. Be not troubled

troubled therefore ; but praise God, since every thing shall prosper with you. Yes, believe me, I am Raphael, as I said just now, one of those Angels that go in and out before the Holy One. This charge I have received. It is the office appertaining to me: Not through any favour, therefore, granted by my will, did I accompany your son, or do those wonders that have signalized his journey, but God sent me. Once more, therefore, give him thanks, and write these doings in a book. Farewell. Be virtuous and be blessed. (*He withdraws*).

Tobit. O friends ! This Azarias was an Angel then ! Why fall we not together prostrate on the ground, and worship ? But not so. Much rather let us hasten to the hill, for thither Raphael is proceeding, and will thence, no doubt, ascend. Let us go after with a holy fear, and, as he mounts, pursue his glorious progress, till we lose him ; and then, falling on the spot, adore till sun set the Divinity that has dispatched his minister to our abode upon an errand of such grace.

CCCIV.

TOBIT'S SONG OF PRAISE.

LET all the earth with one accord,
Give praise to heaven's eternal Lord:
And blessed be his reign!

He scourges, yet does pity show;
He brings men down to hell below,
But lifts them up again.

Fill with his praise your grateful horn,
Ye sons to holy Abraham born,
Tho' captivate ye sigh:

Sing forth his greatness and declare
To all things that draw vital air,
He ever reigns on high.

Yea, with his righteous-dealing might
Still shall his arm our nation smite,
Till they renounce their sin;
When, if we turn with all our mind
Tow'rds him, then he, as we shall find,
To us will turn ag'in.

To

To God then, the eternal king,
Let Israel's sons for ever sing,
And magnify his praise :
I, where a captive now I dwell,
Will to a sinful people tell
How wond'rous are his ways.

O Sion, dedicate to God,
Thy sons awhile shall feel his rod,
But soon their trouble end :
And with rich presents in their hands,
The inhabitants of distant lands
Their knee within thee bend.

Such joys thy lot laid up in store,
Curses shall in *their* cup run o'er
Who point one curse at thee.
While, for thy welfare all who pray,
Happy themselves—the future day
Of thy repose shall see.

Each stone esteemable and rare,
Each, polish'd by the workman's care,
Yea each, man precious call's,
Shall from thy tow'rs beam bright ; and gold
The wond'ring sojourner behold,
Cov'ring thy wide stretch'd walls.

Beryl shall be the pavement too ;
 And ev'ry street with songs still new
 Exalt the Maker's fame :
 " Loud Allelujahs," shall they say,
 " Let us pour out from day to day,
 " To our Creator's name."

CCCV.

TOBIT xiv.

THE DEATHS OF TOBIT AND TOBIAS.

TOBIT, after the recovery of his sight, lived many years, as well as Anna : but at last, the time of his decease arrived, when calling for Tobias to his bed, and those six sons Tobias had been blessed with in the interval between his marriage and the present moment, he addressed him in the following manner :

" Take," said he, " your children ; for
 " behold I am upon the point of dying ; and
 " as soon as both myself and your dear mother
 " are deceased, go back to Media ; for I verily
 " believe those things the prophet Jonas hath
 " denounced on Nineveh ; which, notwithstanding
 " standing

“ standing his prediction has not been as yet
 “ fulfilled, shall speedily be overthrown : But
 “ keep you heedfully the law and the com-
 “ mandments, being merciful and just, that
 “ every thing may prosper with you. And
 “ inter me decently as soon as I am dead, and
 “ Anna with me, when it pleases God that
 “ she shall render up her spirit. In the inter-
 “ val, reflect, dear son, what alms accom-
 “ plish, and how righteousness delivers men
 “ from death.” When he had made an end
 of speaking in this manner, he gave up the
 ghost in bed ; his years amounting nearly to
 eight score. Tobias honourably buried him,
 and not long afterward his mother.

Having faithfully and filially performed these
 pious offices, Tobias, with his wife and chil-
 dren, quitting Nineveh, departed for Ecbatana;
 that he might live with Raguel ; whom, as
 well as Edna, Sara's mother, when they died,
 he buried likewise, and inherited their substance,
 living to a good old age himself.

CCCVI. CCCVII.

2 KINGS xx.

HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS, AND RECOVERY: HIS VANITY AND PUNISHMENT.

BEFORE CHRIST 706.

FOUR years after the assassination of Sennacherib, was Hezekiah taken ill; and while his sickness lasted, came Isaiah to him, saying: "Set your house, O king, in order; for the time is come that you must die." At these sad tidings, Hezekiah turned away his face, and prayed that God would think upon him in the hour of his affliction. But Isaiah, who had not yet got beyond the limits of the palace, was admonished secretly by the Almighty, to return. He did so, and acquainted Hezekiah with the will of God, as follows: "Hezekiah, notwithstanding the distressful message I was just now charged with, God commands me to return, and bring you information of much happier sort. He bids me tell you, he has heard your prayer, and been a witness to those sighs you have been pouring
" out

“ out upon your pillow ; wherefore, he will
 “ take away your sickness in three days ;
 “ enabling you to give him thanks for your
 “ recovery in his holy house,”

Hezekiah. What do I hear ? Is so much
 mercy meant me ?

Isaiah. God has bid me tell you this ; and
 that not only he will grant your restoration from
 this bed of sickness, but add fifteen seasons to
 your life. Let there be laid a lump of figs then
 on the boil, with which you are tormented, and
 the sore shall heal.

Hezekiah. Shall it indeed be so ? But, pro-
 phet, let my doubt be pardoned, if thus weak-
 ened as I am, and almost at the door of death,
 I have my fears on this occasion. Let me
 therefore ask, what sign will God vouchsafe me
 that your word shall be fulfilled.

Isaiah. This too which you require will he
 vouchsafe ; and in the way you may yourself
 prescribe. Chuse, therefore, whether you will
 have the evening hastened on to its conclusion,
 or the morning hours brought back.

Hezekiah. Is God so gracious to me ? How
 then shall I chuse ? I will not have the evening
 hastened on to its conclusion. That is daily
 done by those assaying every method to kill
 time, and seems a much less miracle than
 bringing

bringing back past time ; for who among us can do *that* ? Let me then see the morning hours return, if God thinks fit that such a miracle should be performed in my behalf.

Isaiah. It shall be so. When therefore I have left the palace, let your servant mark the progress of the sun on Ahaz' dial ; for the shadow of its stile shall, sooner than an hour is past, go back no less than ten degrees.

At this, Isaiah took his leave, and Hezekiah saw the accomplishment of every thing that had been prophesied : the shadow of the stile went back, and he recovered from his malady ; soon after which, the sacred writer tells us, that the son of Baladan, then king of Babylon, sent letters with a present to him, having heard he had been sick. King Hezekiah hearkened to the messengers, and shewed them all his house of precious things, his ointments, silver, gold, and spices, all his armour likewise, and his treasures. There was nothing in his house, or any part of his dominions, that he did not shew them.

Whereupon, Isaiah came a second time to Hezekiah, and demanded what those messengers had said, and why they came ?

Hezekiah. They visited my palace from a very distant land, even Babylon.

Isaiah.

Isaiab. And what have they been shewn?

Hezekiah, No less than all things in my house. Among my treasures, there was nothing I forbore to shew them.

Isaiab. Hear then, *Hezekiah,* the Lord's voice. Behold the days approach, that every thing contained within your house, and what your fathers have amassed, shall be transplanted hence to Babylon, till there is nothing left. While of the children issuing from you, they shall take the greater part, and make them eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Hezekiah. Ah me! Shall it be so?

Isaiab. It shall; because you have complacently displayed your treasures to those people, and not magnified the God of Israel, who preserved you from the jaws of death.

Hezekiah. I have done wrong. I see it, and acknowledge that the word which you have uttered from the Lord, is good.

With this, the interview between them finished; eight years after which, king *Hezekiah* died, namely, six hundred and ninety-eight years before Christ, and was succeeded by his son *Manasseh*.

CCCVIII.

2 KINGS xxi.

MANASSEH'S WICKED REIGN.

MANASSEH, at the age of twelve, succeeded Hezekiah, six hundred and ninety-eight years before Christ, and ruled no less than five and fifty years. His actions were a series of abominations to the Lord. He carried his idolatry beyond the example of those lands which Israel had aforetime rooted out, that what are called God's people might succeed to their possessions; building altars in his house to all the host of heaven; by which, we are to understand those fabulous divinities the Amorites had worshipped; and to whom, he sacrificed his very son upon the altar. Therefore, and because the people of the land were willingly seduced by his example, did the Lord denounce tremendous menaces against them, saying: "I will stretch the plummet of Samaria over David's city, called Jerusalem, which I will wipe away, as men wipe clean a dish, and turn it upside down."

But God brought not the evil upon Judah, in Manasseh's life-time, though Manasseh was delivered up into the hands of the Assyrian people, who attacking him, prevailed; and he was

was carried captive by their king to Babylon : but God, on his repentance, ordered such a favourable disposition of events, that some time afterward, he was restored to liberty and empire ; after which, he died, six hundred and forty-three years before Christ ; having governed, as already has been mentioned, five and fifty years.

CCCIX. CCCX.

JUDITH i. to vii.

HOLOFERNES CONSTITUTED LEADER OF THE ASSYRIAN FORCES, AND HIS JEALOUSY OF ACHIOR.

BEFORE CHRIST 650.

SCENE. *A tent.*

HOLOFERNES *and Captains,*

HOLOFERNES.

OUR master, king Nabuchodonosor, hath of his royal favour constituted me the leader of his armies. Hitherto, the scenes of action you have been engaged in would not properly admit of my assembling you, and asking

ing counsel. You have therefore, in the interval, as soldiers, been content with fighting, and required no reason for your leader's will: but now, that we have passed so many regions, and are nigh Judea, we may breathe a little. Therefore have I called you thus together. Hear what motive urges forward the great monarch of Assyria to this war, and when you know it, you may still continue fighting valiantly for his prosperity and fame. From Nineveh, the city where Nabuchodonosor hath built his palace, did he lately lead his army forth against Arphaxad, king of Media, and residing at Ecbatana, because Arphaxad would not bow before those gods, which he himself was used to worship. After having crushed Arphaxad, he designed to visit the whole earth, and force the nations to profess but one religion. In his progress for this pious purpose, he was joined by many nations, whom, on that account, he rather meant to look on as allies, than awe them by his armies; but the Persians, those of Libanus and Antilibanus, the people of Cilicia and Damascus, Carmel, Galaad, and the higher Galilee, the men of Esdrelom, the Jews, and many other countries round about, though knowing he had undertaken such a mighty business, did not send him aids, and therefore
by

by his throne and kingdom did he swear to extirpate them: And to shew himself disposed as he had menaced, he marched forth immediately against Arphaxad, slew him in the mountains, and defeated all his power, returning afterwards to Nineveh, where he appointed me, of late your fellow soldier, to complete the purposes he had so valiantly begun. How we have hitherto succeeded will our letter shew Nabuchodonosor.—(*To a Captain*). You have prepared it. Read then what is written, that if any thing be wanting, we may add it, and send off the epistle.

First Captain (reading). “Holofernes, to the
 “great Nabuchodonosor at Nineveh, sends
 “greeting. Live, O king, for ever. We set
 “out from Nineveh, and after three days’
 “journey came to Bectileth, where, marching
 “to the hills, we rooted out both Phud and
 “Lud, and spoiled the men of Rasses. Thence
 “we passed the Euphrates, and, going forward,
 “ravaged all the borders of Cilicia, killing
 “every one that durst oppose us, till we came
 “to Japheth in Arabia. We have likewise
 “burnt the tents, and every sheep cote in the
 “land of Madian. In Damascus, we laid
 “waste the fields, it being harvest, seized upon
 “the flocks and herds, and smote the people,
 “very

“ very few escaping. These, however, spread
“ the terror of our conquests, as they fled, in
“ such sort, that the nations round about, but
“ more particularly those inhabiting the coasts
“ between us and Judea, where we write this let-
“ ter, sent ambassadors to supplicate our mercy,
“ saying: *We are servants to Nabuchodonosor ;*
“ *do with us as you will, and make such dispo-*
“ *sition of our places, wheat-fields, flocks, herds,*
“ *houses, cities, and inhabitants as is thought*
“ *fit ; for we surrender every thing we have, and*
“ *only beg that life may be allowed us.* We re-
“ ceived their embassies, vouchsafing what they
“ asked for, but put garrisons into their cities,
“ and cut down their groves, that every tongue
“ and tribe among them might give up their
“ sottish worship, and do homage to your gods
“ alone.” —

Holofernes. And there the brief epistle ends,
which shall be sent, at furthest, on the morrow.
When the king has read it, he will see with what
implicit zeal you have fulfilled your orders ; and
his pleasure will increase, when he shall know
that, like good soldiers, you have fought with-
out desiring to consume the time in asking ques-
tions. Had your ardour stood in need of ani-
mation, I should certainly have mentioned what
was looked for from your valour. “ Go before
“ me,

“ me, Holofernes,” said the king, “ and bid
 “ the people of the lands to which I send
 “ you, get me earth and water as a tribute,
 “ and that way acknowledge I command the
 “ land and ocean ; or, provided they refuse to
 “ do so, be it at their peril ; for in that case,
 “ I will lead them captive from their native
 “ country to the farthest region. Go you for-
 “ ward then, of such seize all the coasts ;
 “ and if, when they have once resisted, they
 “ repent, and yield, reserve them for my anger
 “ till the day of punishment ; but if they still
 “ continue their rebellion, put them without
 “ mercy to the sword ; for as I live, and by
 “ the greatness of my kingdom, will I execute
 “ whatever I have spoken.” Thus was I com-
 manded ; but, at present, let us wave this sub-
 ject, and consider matters of much greater mo-
 ment. We have reached at length the borders
 of Judea, and are now to turn our arms against
 the Jews. Which of you here can give us any
 information on the subject of this people ?

Second Captain. We are certified, by spies
 arriving in our camp this very morning, that
 no sooner had we pitched our tents so near the
 borders of their land, than they were seized
 with terror, having learned beforehand of our
 conquests. Not long since, they met together,
 and

and debated on the circumstance of our approach. Of which the issue was, to order forth their troops into Samaria, and the country round about, that they might occupy the mountains, and prepare for war.

Holofernes. But of Bethulia, the strong hold, we shall first meet with in our march, what have those spies informed you?

Second Captain. That their great high priest already has sent letters thither, charging its inhabitants to keep the passes of the hilly country guarded, so that where two men can hardly pass a-breast, our numbers may not profit us. Relying on this circumstance, and the assistance of their God, they think they shall be able to resist the strength of our invasion.

Holofernes. The assistance of their God!

Second Captain. Yes, leader; for within Jerusalem they have a temple, which their superstition causes them to think will be their safety. In this temple, they do worship to their God, and it is called his house. Not long have they returned from their captivity, and ever since been occupied in sanctifying this same temple, with the altar and the holy things therein, from that pollution they had undergone while their captivity continued, and themselves were absent. But, my lord, ask those here present of
the

the Moabitish princes, or the sons of Ammon, who have yielded to our arms, but since become confederates with us. They, whose residence has been so long in Canaan, may inform you more particularly of this people.

Achior. I, lord Holofernes, can do that. They are descended from the people of Chaldaea; but, in early times, disdaining the religion of their fathers, they made choice of a divinity they call the God of heaven. For this, their countrymen rejected them, on which they settled in another land, till, as they say, they were commanded by their god to quit it, and remove into the country of the Canaanites, at no great distance from the region where I governed for my master, when your arms invaded us.

Holofernes. Yes, yes. I recollect at present every thing concerning them; their servitude in Egypt, their deliverance from that land, their passage over Jordan, and the rest.

Achior. Then hear me, Holofernes. Since you know their story, we have only to consider whether they have sinned against their god, or not. If they have sinned, that sin will work their ruin; and, in such case, let us bend our arms against them, being sure of conquest; but if not, let us abstain, lest their divinity defend

them, and our hosts become a scorn to every nation round about us.

Third Captain. And is this your counsel? Shall our army come thus far to be affrighted by a god these Jews set up to worship?

First Captain. Achior is a traitor: he is leagued against us with the people of Judea. Let us therefore kill him: he deserves to die.

Holofernes. Forbear. Be not too rash in what you do.

Second Captain. We will not fear these cowards of Judea, but go forth; for lo! they are a people that will never stand us in the battle.

Third Captain. Therefore let us on, lord Holofernes, for the enemy shall be our prey, and as for Achior——

Holofernes. Once again, forbear. His conduct truly speaks him guilty; but resign the punishment of his offence. Who are you, Achior, that in this wise you should say we ought not to make war against this people, since their god will certainly defend them, as if men could trust to any other god, beside our master's. He will be our shield, while theirs shall not avail them. And you, Achior, hireling as you are of Ammon, shall henceforward see my face no more, till with our arms we have avenged ourselves upon this nation, that
came

came out of Egypt. Yea, expect not then deliverance; for among them shall your portion be assigned when I advance, and you shall perish with their slain.

Achior. For good advice——

Holofernes. Draw near him three or four. Let him not speak: and mark me. Bear him hence in safety to Bethulia. Let him there be left among the people, in whose cause he has stepped forth, that they may know their friend. If, Achior, in Bethulia, you persuade yourself you shall escape my hand, let not your countenance turn pale; but if,—No more. Take him away. You know my mind.—The rest with me.

CCCXI. CCCXII. CCCXIII.

JUDITH vi. vii. viii. ix.

ACHIOR RECEIVED INTO BETHULIA. HOLOFERNES' SIEGE THERE-OF, AND JUDITH'S RESOLUTION.

BEFORE CHRIST 656.

SCENE. *A tent upon the roof of Judith's dwelling in Bethulia.*

JUDITH.

WHY am I now a widow? Were my husband living, his exertions I am sure would save the city from this worthless Holofernes, or at least, my counsel and advice should not be wanting to effect so pious a design. But, dear Manasses, you are dead. I recollect that day, now three years past and upwards, when returning from the field, where you had been to overlook the reapers, you complained of a distracting fever in your brain, sunk down upon the bed, and died. Since that unhappy minute, have I made my dwelling in this tent upon the roof of my abode, worn widow's weeds, continued fasting daily, save upon our sabbath eves, and

and sabbaths, new moons, feasts, and solemn days; not all the while once going down into my dwelling, or abroad. To save, however, my dear country from destruction, would there not be something like a virtue in the violation of my vow? But here, at length, comes Cusa. Her narration will determine me.—(*To Cusa coming in*). Well, Cusa, after such long tarrying, have you prospered? Let me know the whole, dear maid.

Cusa. First then, good mistress (for in consequence of three days absence I have gleaned a world of information), with respect to that same stranger you observed from hence, whom they of Holofernes' army were conducting, you conjectured rightly; he was then their prisoner.

Judith. Yes, so I imagined: but go on; for by your manner of beginning he is now no longer so. What reason could they have for his release? That puzzles me; and since your setting out to get this information, have I ruminated on great things, which are not yet, however, thoroughly digested in my mind. But I am disappointing my impatience, by thus talking, when my business should be to give ear. Go on, and tell me every circumstance of news you have collected.

Cusa. I repaired, as you enjoined me, to the citadel, where, knowing in what family I was a servant, they received me: so that I obtained admittance to the council-chamber, where this stranger was before Ozias, and the other rulers, telling why the enemy had brought him in so strange a manner thither. Do you understand me thoroughly, dear mistress?

Judith. Yes, go on.

Cusa. For as I learnt of those attending the examination, they had brought him to the fountains. They designed to bring him nearer, but our people from the town prevented them by throwing stones. However, having privily obtained the shelter of the hill, they bound their prisoner, and there left him; going back themselves to Holofernes.

Judith. But how comes it, you have been so long away; for this is the third morning since you left me? I imagined you had met with some misfortune, and were likely never to return.

Cusa. Dear mistress, I was sensible of your anxiety to have whatever information I could bring, and therefore tarried to obtain it longer than perhaps was needful; so that having made enquiry touching the besiegers and their progress, I was minded to return, but could not.

All

All the gates, by order of Ozias, being shut; and would you think it, mistress? having been so ever since. But, by good fortune, I got out this morning, after fearing I should be a prisoner there myself, till Holofernes took the fortress, and released me, if he had that generosity.

Judith. And is the siege so far advanced?

Cusa. Too far indeed: but I am not yet come to that part of my story. Our Bethulians, seeing from the walls a stranger brought among them in so unaccountable a manner, issued forth and loosed him. He was brought before the governor, and this is the account he gave, while I was standing by:—That in the days of his good fortune, he had been a captain of the Ammonites; that Holofernes had laid waste his country; that to save himself and others with him, he had entered into terms of treaty, and consented to become a leader in the conqueror's host. That on a late occasion, Holofernes, having summoned an assembly, and asked tidings of the Israelites, as well as whether he should prosecute his march against them, he had counselled his forbearance, saying: "God
" would be our safeguard;" that this unexpected counsel kindled a suspicion of his honesty to Holofernes' party; and that, finally, by way of punishment, he had been brought,

and left as I have mentioned. Holofernes, meaning to take vengeance on him, when he came into Bethulia as a conqueror, till which time he gave him life, that he might undergo the more, while he remained in expectation of the day, when he should die for certain with his fellow victims in Bethulia.

Judith. God of my forefathers! Shall I hear this insult on thy people, and not feel a wish within me to avenge it, on the ruffians that durst harbour such a thought? No; I am fixed in my resolves: but, tell me, Cusa, do the people of Bethulia fear this Holofernes?

Cusa. Do they fear him! Ah, good mistress, he has wherewithal to make them tremble at his name; for scarcely had his soldiers left the stranger, than he marched his army forward, and begirt the place, with upwards of two hundred thousand fighting men. They have already stopped up all the fountains, so that for these thirty hours and more, the inhabitants have been without a drop of water. In this melancholy situation, Holofernes pressed them to surrender, menacing the worst should they draw out the siege in their despair of safety.

Judith. And what consequences followed?

Cusa. What! you should have heard the lamentations of the people in the streets, and
seen

seen the miserable plight of women with their children. "We have now no helper," was the common cry; "for God has sold us to this Holofernes; and unless he can be wrought on to take pity on us, we shall die with thirst." What could Ozias do? Despairing of relief, he sent a messenger to Holofernes, promising, that if in five days' time, his God did not relieve Bethulia, he would yield it up into his hands, if he vouchsafed the inhabitants their lives. He has accepted the proposal, and in some sort are the people now delivered from their apprehension.

Judith. If in five days' time his God did not relieve Bethulia! Haste, go back, my faithful Cusa, and call hither speedily Ozias. Happily the gate by which you left Bethulia is not yet shut up again, or if it be, when you inform the centry that your mistress, the afflicted widow Judith, would, on business of the utmost moment to Bethulia, speak in private with the governor, but cannot leave her dwelling, he will let Ozias hear the message. Go then, Cusa, and deliver it. Stay not; for I shall be unhappy till a certain great atchievement is accomplished. My instructions are delivered in a hurry, yet your own good sense will judge of what may be deficient, and supply it: but

particularly tell him, that by no means he refuse to let me see him, and immediately; for nothing less than the Creator's glory is dependent on the circumstance I would communicate. Go, Cusa, quickly, and return as quickly; for to you I would say something likewise.

Cusa. Is it possible! I fly, dear mistress, to perform your bidding.

Judith (after Cusa is gone out). She is gone; and I am left at liberty to pray. O God of Simeon, my father, who received a sword from thee, that he might take revenge on strangers for defiling an unspotted virgin, hear *me* likewise, though a woman; for behold, the Assyrians are increased in power. On this, they place their trust, and know not that thou only holdest in thy hand the scale of battle. Throw down their vain glorious strength; for they have purposed to prophane thy sanctuary; and do thou bestow on me that courage, which the act I have conceived within me stands in need of. Prosper the deceit that is to issue from my lips, and smite the soldiers with their leader, and the leader with his soldiers by my hand, who am a woman: for thy power stands not in need of multitude to aid it, since thou shewest thyself a God to the afflicted, an upholder to the feeble, and a saviour to the hopeless.

less. Make my speech to be their wound and stripe, for having purposed cruel things against thy hallowed house and Sion: so shall every tribe and nation see that thou art the protector of our people.—Here comes Cusa.

Cusa (re-entering). I have done your message, dearest mistress, as you bade. The gates were shut: but I made known my errand to the centry, who, before I left the gate, had passed it forward. Therefore, will Ozias soon come hither.

Judith. Yes, I know he will so. In the interval, dear Cusa, therefore, let me ask if you conceive it possible a woman's arm might save her country?

Cusa. Save her country!

Judith. Yes, dear maid; for know, that I have formed a resolution full of death and danger, for the welfare of my brethren, menaced thus by Holofernes: And that now I mean to try you. Is there so much *man*, as I may say, about you, so much courage, and so much affection, that to save your country, you would join me in an enterprize, such as I have these many days been meditating. Not that I design, however, you should face the danger of it. *That* will I endure, myself, in person. All I wish is this, that you would grant me your

companionship, so shall I hasten whither I have purposed, and my modesty not suffer in the thought of scoffers, when they see me come among them.

Cusa. Ah! dear mistress, speak not to me in this manner. You have formed some scheme to benefit Bethulia. Let me share the danger of it with you then, as well as be associate with you for the sake of modesty. Whatever you have planned, I will assist: nor, though I *might* perhaps be justified upon the ground of prudence for enquiring previously what service I am called in thus to further, will I, in my zeal for Israel, ask one question; since to prosper in the undertaking may depend on the concealment of it; for although a woman, yet I love my country, and methinks could sacrifice myself for its well being.

Judith. Dear, dear handmaid! Your assent affords me every prospect of success: but, after all, you shall not for my sake encounter any danger. You shall be the partner of my journey, and that only; but share with me in the glory of the undertaking, which my heart informs me cannot but succeed. Ah! you have well performed your message! for here comes the governor. (*Seeing Cusa is about to leave the tent*). Withdraw not, Cusa. We are now companions,

companions, and all inequality of fortune for the future shall be lost between us. This, at least, is the reward your zeal in favour of your country and a mistress should procure you.—(*To Ozias coming in*). Pardon me, my lord, if being what I am, and you upon the other hand engaged in the defence and safeguard of God's people, I have sent to commune with you; and forgive me too, if now, that you have condescended to vouchsafe my suit, I speak things grating to your nature; for God's providence has put me upon doing both.

Ozias. Say on, good Judith; for Bethulia is the witness of your worth in all things: therefore, came I at your bidding, and will patiently give ear; now I am come, to any matter God may have inspired you to declare. Speak therefore freely.

Judith. Thus encouraged, I will bless God's goodness for you, and unburthen my whole heart; believe me then, that in your having promised to deliver up Bethulia at the expiration of five days, if God does not beforehand send you help, you have done very wrong; for what are human beings that dare tempt the Lord? You cannot sound men's bosoms, nor divine their thoughts: how then shall you be able to know God's, or comprehend his purposes?

purposes? Be not offended, my good lord, at such harsh sayings; but impute them to the spirit that is operating while I speak within me.

Ozias. I am not offended at this freedom, but commend it. Once more then continue, and speak every thing you wish to say.

Judith. You have desired a five days' respite; and if God does not ordain you help before those days be at an end, you give up every thing as lost: but though he should not aid us in the compass of that time, he can assist us afterward, if he thinks proper. Wait then rather for salvation from him, and invoke his power; for he will hear us if he pleases.

Ozias. Doubtless will he!

Judith. But alas, if we resign Bethulia, all Judea will be wasted, and subjection prove our portion. Let us shew all Israel then a great example, since our brethren's happiness depends upon us. And moreover, far from suffering sorrow to deject our bosoms, let us thank the Lord our God, who trieth us, as formerly he did our fathers, recollecting what he did to Abraham; and in Syria, what befel his grandson Jacob, when he kept his uncle's sheep.

Ozias. What you have said has issued from an upright heart, and no one upon earth can
contradict

contradict you; for this day is not the first in which your wisdom has been manifest; but from a child has Israel noted it within you. But now patiently hear *me*, while I account for my proceeding; for I thought, by this surrender, to evince my pity for the people of the place, since they had drouht before their eyes, and were afraid of Holofernes. Pray you, therefore, for us, so shall the Almighty send down rain to fill our cisterns, and the inhabitants no longer faint for lack of drink.

Judith. Hear me, my lord; for I will do a thing which shall be spoken of by many a generation of God's people. To the city you shall hasten your return, while I, together with my waiting woman here, will issue forth; and be you certain, that before the days are all concluded, after which you have engaged to render up the city, God will visit Israel by my hand. Ask not, however, what I mean to do; for nothing shall transpire until the deed declare itself.

Ozias. But virtuous lady, think what danger—

Judith. No: my soul looks down with scorn upon the danger; or, as rather I should say, looks up to God who will avert the danger.

Ozias. Say you so? In God's name then, prepare to undertake the enterprize whatever it may be, and go in peace.

Judith.

Judith. I waited but for such permission. Go then, Cusa, and put forth my garments, such as I was wont to wear before I lost my husband; fill up too a flask with wine, put oil into a cruse, and get a bag to hold parched corn, dried figs, with fruits in season, and fine bread. This is my only preparation. It will soon be made. Bestir yourself, dear Cusa, with all diligence, and then will we set out together for the camp of Holofernes. So much of my scheme have I disclosed; but for the rest—leave it, my lord, to time.

Ozias. I know not, after all, if, in consideration of your safety, I should give assent to this, perhaps, rash enterprize you are resolved on.

Judith. Come; you have already granted your assent. Let us be gone then, nor afford you the occasion of recalling it. Come, Cusa, if you love me; for indeed we have no time to lose.

Ozias. Let me, at least, wait for you here, till you have put on your apparel.

Judith. No; let us much rather separate where we are. The plan I have concerted, needs it. You shall hasten to the citadel; and I, with Cusa, whither my design conducts me. Stay not even while (for preparation) I go down into the dwelling, but go back and tell your people

people that their safety shall be finally accomplished by a woman's arm, before that stipulated season, when they thought they should despair.

Ozias. Farewell; and may the God of Israel guide you. I come after.

CCCXIV.

JUDITH x. xi. xii.

JUDITH IN THE CAMP OF HOLOFERNES.

BEFORE CHRIST 656.

BAGOAS and a Soldier.

BAGOAS.

A WOMAN did you say, my lord?

Bagoas. I did; and followed by another. I observed them coming down the valley, and could mark they were upon an errand of importance, even to their lives. Had they been men, I should have put the centries on their guard; for I was near them in my usual evening walks, about the limits of the camp for air and exercise.

The Soldier. The centries, notwithstanding, stopped them?

Bagoas.

Bagoas. That was no way needful. They came up; when she who was the mistress, and much fairer than the other, stepping forward craved safe conduct to the tent of Holofernes, promising she would point out a way by which the whole hill country might be won, without the forfeit of one life through all his army.

The Soldier. This while you were standing by?

Bagoas. I was attracted by the sight; and though the speaker's beauty rivetted my observation to her countenance and person; yet the business she was come upon still more excited my attention, I drew nearer, saying: "She had saved her life by coming thus to Holofernes." Follow then, continued I, for I am Bagoas, his chief eunuch, and can bring you where he is. Be, therefore, of good courage when you come into his presence; and make good your promise, which will gain you gentle treatment at his hands. So saying, I turned round, and led the way; she followed with her damsel, till we reached the general's tent, while all the people who, by this time, had come round, as they were both without, and waiting for admission, wondered at her beauty, saying: "Who could, in his heart, despise a people that possess such women."

The Soldier.

The Soldier. They were no long time kept standing, I suppose, without?

Bagoas. No longer than was needful, I suppose, to count a hundred; after which, the widow (for, by this time, were we told, the mistress had been married, though her garments did not tell us so), was introduced to Holofernes.

The Soldier. And you entered with her, Bagoas? Tell me, therefore, the whole scene, and every thing that passed between them.

Bagoas. Willingly; for during the whole conversation, I was present. Being introduced, and while the leader seemed quite struck with so much beauty, she fell down upon the ground before him, and did reverence. Holofernes courteously held out his hand, bade her fear nothing, but declare the reason of her coming, and assured her, she should meet with succour, if she needed an asylum.

The Soldier. And to this what said the widow?

Bagoas. Thanked him, and began her story in this manner: "Listen, mighty Holofernes, " to your servant, though a woman; for believe me, I am come with this my servant, " who, to spare her mistress the confusion of " attempting her escape alone, hath, as you " see, consented to become the partner of my " journey:

" journey : Yes, lord Holofernes, I am come
 " to be your friend, if you vouchsafe me
 " hearing."

The Soldier. Which, no doubt, he did?

Bagoas. Yes, bade her be of courage, and
 continue. She obeyed as follows: " In the
 " first place, with regard to what that Am-
 " monite, called Achior, said at his expulsion
 " from among you, and for which the people
 " of Bethulia have received him kindly, we
 " have heard the whole. Think, therefore, no
 " ways lightly of his counsel; for Bethulia
 " never will be taken till the inhabitants incur
 " new sin, as they are now upon the point of
 " doing; since their food and water failing,
 " they intend to eat and drink what God hath,
 " by his law, forbid; and then they will be
 " certainly destroyed."

The Soldier. So then we shall obtain pos-
 session of Bethulia, and not shed one drop of
 blood?

Bagoas. Of our own blood: but as for all
 their people, thus went on the widow: " See-
 " ing, therefore, that Bethulia will be thus
 " destroyed, both I and this my servant have
 " escaped, and God hath sent me to accom-
 " plish things in your behalf, at which the
 " world shall be astonished; for I serve the
 " God

“ God of heaven by night as well as day.
“ Now, therefore, we will stay with you, my
“ lord, and every night go out into the valley,
“ where I mean to supplicate God’s goodness,
“ who will tell me when the people of Be-
“ thulia have proceeded to this sin ; and then,
“ I will return and shew it you, by way of
“ token for your going forth with all the
“ soldiery ; and I will lead you through Ju-
“ dea to Jerusalem, that in the middle of it
“ I may place you ; for my skill in divination
“ has discovered I shall do thus much.”

The Soldier. This pleased the leader doubt-
less ?

Bagoas. Yes, so much so, that transported at
her prophecy, he ordered his domestics to serve
up a banquet : but she answered, “ No ; I
“ will not eat of any thing, excepting what
“ my servant has brought with her here.”
And saying so, she bade the damsel shew her
bag.

The Soldier. And did the leader suffer this ?

Bagoas. He could not but comply ; for every
Ninevite must know that never Hebrew eats
or drinks except with Hebrews. Holofernes,
therefore, was content to ask how he should
save their maintenance of bread, or how re-
cruit it, if occasioned by the length of time
she

she might remain among them, it should prove deficient? "Oh," replied the widow, "as you live, my lord, we shall not spend those things we have, before our God accomplishes the thing he has resolved shall come to pass."

The Soldier. And then?

Bagoas. And then the conversation ceased; for Holofernes seeing her fatigued, commanded that both she and her companion should have couches spread, which were got ready, and they slept till midnight, when the widow rose, went out and prayed with her attendant, at a place beyond the camp, as she had intimated she would do. And thus has she continued now these three days, rising at the hour of midnight, and repairing to the valley, where she prays that God would perfect the great work for which she is come over to us.

The Soldier. What a woman! But I think you mentioned she had now been three days here?

Bagoas. I did: in all which time she has abstained from Holofernes' company, though he hath often sent to bring her to him.

The Soldier. And she will not come?

Bagoas. She has refused as often as he sent to see her. But, no more at present. Holofernes comes this way. Do you withdraw, and on the

the morrow I will speak with you again. Retire: I would not have my lord observe you here. He comes a little unexpectedly upon us, and seems thoughtful.

The Soldier. On the morrow! Good. Till when, farewell.

Bagoas. Farewell.—(After the Soldier is gone out). What can occasion this? I never saw him yet so pensive.

Holofernes (entering). I was seeking you. Where is this Hebrew woman?

Bagoas. In the tent, my lord, which you assigned her. When the hour of midnight comes, she rises, and, attended by her maid, goes out into the valley, afterwards returns, that they may sleep till morning, and all day conceals herself from public observation.

Holofernes. Bagoas, it will be a blot upon us, if we let so fair a woman leave the camp, not having had her company. Go once more, therefore, and inform her I intend at night to have a private banquet in my tent, at which I crave she will be present. Should she still decline the invitation, urge it, and enforce my suit with all the rhetoric you can utter. Haste, and bring me back her answer. I will wait here for it. Quick then, Bagoas; and remember in the interval with what impatience I am waiting to be told how you have prospered.

Bagoas.

Bagoas. Trust to my activity. Her tent is scarce a stone's throw off; and notwithstanding she has hitherto refused your invitations, once more will I leave no argument unturned to win her.

Holofernes (after Bagoas is gone out). Sure, there is not such another in the world for beauty! She writes woman in her countenance, however; and, as such, should she refuse to gratify me, wherefore do I govern men, if I have not the power to bend her spirit to my inclinations: So I should do, but am awed by the consideration of that service she is meditating for my master's benefit, respecting this Bethulia. I must, therefore, for the present, feign full acquiescence with her will; and if she send me word by Bagoas she declines her presence at this banquet, have I any means by which I may command it?—Not till she has realized her promise in Bethulia's overthrow and sackage. Let that service but be done, and then, unless her understanding be no less defective than her beauty is abundant, she would look as heedfully as she is able to herself. Yes, yes; it shall be so: let then Bethulia but once fall into our hands, and I may then command by means I dare not have recourse to now. But Bagoas is returning. What can so much speed import?

import? Has she consented; for as yet, there has been hardly time sufficient to employ those arguments he promised he would urge to win her.—(*To Bagoas returning*). Bagoas, why are you returned so quickly?

Bagoas. Having won the fortress——

Holofernes. Won it! Have you prospered then?

Bagoas. You were afraid, my lord, that this same widow would refuse; but I, at length, have found her kind; as witness my short stay. I was admitted to her tent the moment I appeared before it. “Beauteous widow,” (it was thus I introduced myself), “the noble Holofernes sends once more to have your presence
“at a banquet he intends to give this night;
“and if so far he may obtrude his suit, while
“others would perhaps consider they had only
“to command, he hopes he shall not any
“longer be denied.”

Holofernes. You said thus much; and what was her reply?

Bagoas. At first, I must acknowledge, she looked pensive; and methought was just proceeding to refuse you: but, when least of all so great an alteration was expected, I observed her of a sudden brighten up; and with a smile she answered: “Who am I,

“ that though already I have more than once
“ denied lord Holofernes a request his soul was
“ set on, I should still continue to gainsay
“ him? Surely, whatsoever pleases him I will
“ comply with; and to do so, shall afford me
“ pleasure till the day of my decease. One
“ thing, however, I desire,” said she, “ and
“ which, I hope, my lord will not refuse
“ me; namely, that my maid may be ad-
“ mitted to the tent, when we retire to rest,
“ as I have something to communicate con-
“ cerning my not going forth to prayer as
“ usual.”

Holofernes. And you promised her thus much?

Bagoas. I did so, in your name, my lord.

Holofernes. And in so doing, you did well.
My happiness is then complete, and I shall pass
the night, as well as evening, with this charm-
ing Hebrew. Come then, and together let us
see that all things be got ready for her fit re-
ception.

CCCXV.

JUDITH xiii.

THE DEATH OF HOLOFERNES.

SCENE. *The General's tent.*JUDITH (*to Bagoas going out*).

HOLOFERNES is withdrawn. This banquet, I must own, has been a princely one ; such honour he has shewn me ! What then can *I* do, but yield myself entirely to his will ? I have renounced my country ; in return for which, God has provided me a friend, and I will hasten to him. Do me, therefore, sir, the kindness of enquiring for my servant, who, by this time, waits without. I will but give her my directions, and go in to Holofernes.

Bagoas. Yes ; by this time, I imagine, she must be without.. Stay then, and I will send her in. Good night, fair lady.

Judith. And good night to you. (*After he is gone out*). He too is gone, and I am now at leisure to reflect upon the action, which, e'er midnight come, I must accomplish. It was happy for me, that the leader thought of bidding me to such a banquet. I was minded to

H 2

refuse

refuse at first my presence ; but before his eunuch had done speaking, I considered it might hold me out the opportunity I fought for, and consented. It is likewise happy for me, that indulging to excess, he is withdrawn not master of himself. I am emboldened by the circumstance of his stupidity. I hoped he would not check his hand when wine excited him to put it forth ; and trusting to this hope, concerted every thing with Cusa, who will soon be here. I marvel much indeed she is not come already : but, alas ! let me not blame her ; for the camp is intricate, and possibly she has not taken the straight path conducting hither. In the adjoining tent, which serves him as a chamber, and to which I took the opportunity of stealing unobserved, I noted, without any fear upon my spirits, what, on this occasion, might be useful to me. Therefore will I set about the atchievement, which, though horrid in itself, yet, looking forward to the glorious consequence, will, I am certain, make me often talked of, and applauded by the nations round about. (*Kneeling*). O God of power, look on the weak endeavours of my hand, and prosper them ; for now is come the period.—But no more, for Cusa I behold approaching.—(*To Cusa coming in*). O my dear,
dear

dear Cusa! You are come when I was wishing for you. What! You shew me you have brought our bag. Give, give it me. I have employment for it. Hear me then. The lustful Holofernes hath retired to take his rest. So much the better for my purposes!

Cusa. Dear mistress! what intend you? There is something in your eye that frightens me.

Judith. Well, if I can, I will be calm, that you may not be frightened: but what voice was that?

Cusa. That! what?

Judith. Methought, I heard him calling Judith.—Judith, come to bed, my love.

Cusa. Who should say this, dear mistress? Holofernes, you have told me, is retired to rest: and in the tent about us there prevails the deepest silence.

Judith. You are in the right; but I mistook. There is a certain horror reigning in me, that diverts my other senses from their proper office; and I fancied I heard Holofernes speak. Oh Cusa!

Cusa. Well, dear mistress. What can be the occasion of all this? You tremble!

Judith. Have I not sufficient cause to tremble? And if Holofernes could but guess, would he not

tremble too? But wine has overcome him: he will therefore be dispatched the sooner, and I go——

Cusa. Dispatched! For heaven's sake, mistress, think what you would do! Alas! I came intending to share any danger with you; but conceived not you had such a deed in view. Would you kill Holofernes?——

Judith. If I stay, I shall be tempted to pursue the path of prudence, and Bethulia for a certainty will fall at last: but God is in my heart, and the Divinity incites me to this deed. That thought suffices, and I dare defy all danger. Wait, dear Cusa, here, till I come back. It is my country calls me, and as soon as I return, we will go back together. If I stay much longer, he may then have slept off his debauch, and wake. Therefore I will be sudden——

Cusa. But——

Judith. Off—off—I am resolved. (*She goes out*).

Cusa (alone). What will become of us! Who would have thought she meant to kill him, and here likewise, in the midst of his own camp? If we should be discovered!—My whole frame is almost shaken to its dissolution! What then must not my dear mistress feel,
whose

whose hand is to perform this deed, if I, at the idea of it, am thus frightened! He will certainly awake; and I, in that case likewise, shall become the victim of my mistress's rash action. What then if I follow and persuade her from it?—But what noise was that? It must awake him!—Miserable Judith! to attempt so desperate an action!—but I hear her tread. She is returning.

Re-enter JUDITH running with her bag quite full.

Judith. This, this way Judith. I have done the deed, and have the leader's head here in my bag, together with the canopy spread over him. I tore it from the pillars, and have squeezed it up together. Speak not, but away with me, while we are safe; for Holofernes, that lies weltring in his blood with no one near him, cannot give the alarm. Come, come: the guards, as I have taken due precaution, will imagine we are going forth to pray, and let us pass. Be quick, for we must compass the whole valley that surrounds the camp, before we reach Bethulia, where I know the people are impatient till they see us.

CCCXVI. CCCXVII.

JUDITH xiv. xv.

BETHULIA SAVED; AND THE ASSY-
RIAN HOST DISPERSED.

JUDITH and her maid, escaping from the camp of Holofernes, reached Bethulia, as we read, before the morning light, with information of his death. Thanksgivings being offered up to heaven for the patriot act of Judith, she advised that Holofernes' head should be hung up, where every one might see it; and that after sun-rise, on the morrow, the whole garrison should issue forth to overthrow the enemy. This said, she sent for Achior, who appearing, learned what Judith had performed on Holofernes. This so thoroughly convinced him of the power which must have aided a weak woman's arm, that he was circumcised upon the spot; and ever afterward believed in God.

The sun, soon after, rose; and the Bethulians issued forth in arms. This put the Assyrians into motion: but their leader's death, the night before, threw every thing into confusion.

fusion. They were furiously attacked, and put to flight by the Bethulians, and inhabitants of other places round about, who joined in the pursuit, when they were told of Holofernes' death.

The city being thus preserved, and the besieging army put to flight beyond all possibility of rallying, the Bethulians, in their joy, bestowed on Judith Holofernes' tent, together with his stuff; besides which gift, the women celebrated her applause in dances, crowned her with a garland, and by other methods testified their gratitude; while she poured out her praise to the Almighty in a song, as in the following article.

CCCXVIII.

JUDITH xvi.

JUDITH'S SONG.

TAKE the timbrel ; tune the song ;
 And to God the note prolong.
 A new hymn sing to his praise ;
 For merciful are all his ways.

Tell his name the nations round ;
 Let it through the world resound ;
 And awe struck mortals know
 That on themselves whoever trust,
 Them he lays prostrate in the dust,
 And brings the valiant low.

Proud Assur to Bethulia's city sent
 Her armies, a vast host on plunder bent,
 So vast, that in our borders while they lay,
 The river scarce sufficed their thirst to stay ;
 And when their horse, brought forth in order
 due,
 Rang'd o'er the hills, the hills they hid from
 view ;
 Their boast was to have wrapp'd our walls in
 flame,
 Ras'd from among mankind Bethulia's name ;
 Murder'd

Murder'd our youth ; the babe, though sucking
found,
Snatch'd from the breast, to dash it on the
ground ;
And prostituted to their wicked will,
The unspotted maid,—less cruel such to kill !

But God, that can great things perform,
Has, by a woman's hand,
From Israel turn'd away the storm,
And sav'd his fav'rite land.

For quell'd as they have been, they cannot say,
That their great Holofernes vanquish'd lay
Beneath a greater hero's power ;
Nor as their fables tell us, that some son
Not of earth's lineage, but from Titan sprung,
Subdu'd him in his evil hour.

But that even I, Merari's daughter born
Obscure, and whom no lineal boasts adorn,
Beguil'd his bosom with my charms :
When to his ruin, and life's forfeit too,
War he renounc'd, and fought instead to woo
A worthless woman to his arms.

For when God's people stood in fear
Of slav'ry, and beheld a foe so near,

To save them, I put off the garb I wore
Of my lone state,—a widow then no more :

Rich unguents cheer'd my face,
That took a borrow'd grace ;
Loose o'er my limbs, I threw
A robe of snowy hue ;

And sandals to my feet applied,
Such as are wont to grace the expected bride.

They ravish'd Holofernes' eager eye,
As, in this wise assorted, I drew nigh.

He could not look his fill ;

But with a lustful will,

And fascinated mind

By drink with beauty join'd,

Fain would have had me all alone ;

When lo ! as on the bed his limbs were thrown,

Deep drench'd in wine,—with his own sword

I smote him—I prevail'd—for, as he lay,

From his broad shoulders, suddenly thus gor'd,

His head struck off at once, I bore away :

The Persians, at my courage, shook with fear,

And the Medes trembled of my feat to hear.

Thus our oppress'd with joy were fill'd ;

While them, distress dismay'd ;

For Providence they saw had will'd

We should approve his aid.

To

To God, whose deeds all homage claim,
My spirit a new song shall frame ;
For no less merciful than great
Our humble in his lofty state,
Pitying he views ; and, from above,
Pours down the treasures of his love.

You, therefore, all ye creatures, join
Your themes of grateful praise to mine,

To God who spake the word,
When chaos instant heard ;
And from the dust up sprung
Each form your tribes among ;
Beneath whose soft'ring hand,
Stretch'd out in ev'ry land,
Life you enjoy ;— and who,
(Such is his power all nature through),
Should he your days no more sustain,
Would sink into your dust again.

Mountains, at length, shall from their bases flee :
Ocean a mighty bulk be done away,
And, like soft wax in the sun's noon tide ray,
Rocks disappear :—But, O great-God, of thee
Eternal shall the pow'r and glory be.

The rejoicings, at Bethulia's rescue, were
continued three whole months ; before the close
of

of which, we read that Judith dedicated, as a gift to God, the stuff of Holofernes, which the people had bestowed upon her, and the canopy which she herself had brought into Bethulia: After this, though many sought her hand in marriage, she remained a widow, dying at a hundred years of age, and being greatly mourned for by the house of Israel.

CCCXIX.

2 KINGS XXI.

AMON'S WICKED REIGN.

BEFORE CHRIST 643.

THIS Amon was the prince in order next to that Manasses, spoken of in article the three hundred and eighth. His reign, however, was but two years long; and yet, in that short space of time, he was as wicked as his father had before him been. His servants murdered him; but Amon's subjects punished the assassins of their master, and then made his son, Josiah,* king.

CCCXX.

* This Josiah is another of the line, in which Christ Jesus was to come into the world; for Asa, mentioned in the note to
Article

CCCXX.

2 KINGS xxii.

THE PROPHECY OF HULDAH.

BEFORE CHRIST 624.

SCENE. *A room.*HULDAH, *with a book before her*, and HILKIAH.

HULDAH.

I NEED not read the book ; for, as a prophetess, I was before admonished, by the Lord of its contents, and am to tell you what it means : but, in the first place, let me know, as far as you are able, how the book was found.

Hilkiah. Whatever, holy woman, I can tell, shall be disclosed. Our late king Amon's son Josiah, who now governs, as you know, in Judah, with such equity, and has done so these eighteen years and upwards, having lately ordered certain reparations in the house of God, it fell to me that I should overlook the work ;

Article 236, begat Josaphat ; Josaphat, Joram ; Joram, Ozias ; Ozias, Joatham ; Joatham, Achaz ; Achaz, Hezekiah ; Hezekiah, Manasses ; Manasses, Amon ; and Amon, Josiah. See the 1st chapter of Matthew, verses 8, 9, 10. -

when

when lo! in going through the temple, and examining the several parts, I found this book.

Huldah. Which you delivered to the king?

Hilkiah. I did so, seeing it contained denunciations on Jerusalem. Josphah read it over, and commanding me, began as follows: "Go," said he, "and make enquiry of the Lord for me and for the people, what may be the purport of the book; for great is the Almighty's wrath against the land, because our fathers hearkened not to his commands." This is the message I am charged with.

Huldah. And the Lord's reply is this: "Go, tell Josphah, I will pour my judgments out upon Jerusalem, and its inhabitants, pursuant to the prophecy recorded in this book; because my people in Manasses and his father's time, forsook me, and did sacrifice to other gods."

Hilkiah. Alas! alas! is this then the reply I am to carry back!

Huldah. It is; but, to Josphah say, because his heart is blameless, and because he rent his garments when he read this book (for every thing has the Almighty told me, though you mentioned not this last particular concerning him), because he has done this, and wept before him, he hath listened to Josphah's supplication,

tion, and will, therefore, gather him in peace and honour, though by no means through a prosperous state of being, to his fathers in the sepulchre; nor shall he see the evil to be brought upon his land. Go, bear this message to Josiah, and farewell.

Hilkiab. Farewell. When I relate this answer of the prophets, what tears will not Josiah shed! but I must do my duty.

CCCXXI. CCCXXII.

2 KINGS xxiii.

THE ABOLITION OF IDOLATRY IN
JUDAH, WITH THE BURNING OF
MEN'S BONES AT BETHEL.

BEFORE CHRIST 624.

SCENE. *Several altars.*

JOSIAH and HILKIAH.

JOSIAH.

THOUGH God has sworn to visit his unhappy people with so many judgments, as the book of Huldah threatens. Let us do our utmost to allay the fury of his anger, notwithstanding

withstanding we are far from being authorized to hope it may be wholly set aside; for is it not of some importance whether we endure a greater or less part of his displeasure in the present world, and that which is to come.

Hilkiah. Praised be God, my lord, who fills your royal bosom with such pious thoughts.

Josiah. We have already purged the temple of its prophanations: All the vessels made for Baal, for the grove, and for the host of heaven, have we brought out, and burnt to ashes in the field of Kidron, scattering them upon the graves of the unhappy children of our people.

Hilkiah. By which wreck, the priests that prophesied false things are now no longer suffered to continue their abominations.

Josiah. How beyond description dreadful, that at Topheth, in the vale of Hinnom, parents should have laid their sons and daughters on the altar, as so many sacrifices to the monster Moloch! He *must* be a monster; for can God, the father of those beings that have issued from us, take a pleasure in such offerings?

Hilkiah. They are now, or we have cause at least to hope so, at an end for ever: And if such inhuman sacrifices are abolished, can we but have reason to suppose, those sottish adorations,
which

which of late the people practised, will no more be heard of? Witness Judah's worship, paid devoutly to those horses that a people were instructed to imagine drew the chariot of the sun. Insensible! To be partaker of the comforts from that luminary, yet insensible of the eternal power that made it!

Josiah. Let us hope these vile abuses never will prevail again, to anger God's benevolence. So many causes of that anger are already done away, yet are there others still remaining, whereupon to vent our indignation for God's honour; and accordingly, our pious labour having elsewhere been accomplished, we are now come here to Bethel, where idolatry so long has triumphed, and where Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, first instituted, as he did at Dan, the golden calf, which he himself acknowledged and bowed down to. These, Hilkiah, are the altars. They shall not continue one day longer standing: But what pray are these?

Hilkiah. They are the sepulchres, erected by the wicked zeal of Jeroboam, to the memory of those prophets that were ministers to Baal.

Josiah. Let not one among them have such honourable rest. How proudly are their titles blazoned to the world! Let them be rooted up e'er sun-set, and the bones within them burnt
upon

upon the altars, whereupon they sacrificed to their false gods.—But what may be that humble title, there, which I behold? Read it, and tell me who lies buried near the spot.

Hilkiab (drawing near). It is the sepulchre erected to the memory of the man of God, who came from Judah, and foretold the very things which you are doing now.

Josiah. The man of God that came from Judah?—I remember now: And close beside him, I discover lies that prophet who came hither from Samaria. Let them both alone. Let no man touch their bones. Let them, by no means, be confounded with the idols' prophets. Grant, good heaven, that I may die as well as they did! They were virtuous in their time; but as for me—

Hilkiab. Why speaks my lord thus mournfully?

Josiah. Thus mournfully indeed! My soul is full of sorrow.

Hilkiab. And why so, my lord?

Josiah. Because I recollect the great severity God exercised upon the prophet from Samaria. He foretold, as you have said, Hilkiab, every thing that was to come to pass, respecting Bethel, with this altar here; and after he had prophesied against it, the Almighty, for no fault

fault that he had done, decreed he should be torn in pieces by a lion. Such, Hilkiab, is my fortune. For no fault that I have done, am I condemned. I know that for a certainty the desolation of my country, of that country which I love and cherish, is at last to be effected. What then can I do but speak thus mournfully?

Hilkiab. Consider not the matter so.

Josiah. Can I avoid so doing? O Hilkiab! I am overwhelmed with sorrow; but God's will be done. Let me lean on you, and get hence. It is too much to be endured. And yet, let every altar hereabouts be overturned.

Hilkiab. It shall be done, my lord. Leave every thing to me.

CCCXXIII.

2 KINGS xxiii.

THE GOOD JOSIAH'S DEATH.

BEFORE CHRIST 610.

THOUGH Josiah had demeaned himself in such an exemplary manner, yet we read that God decreed him an unhappy death. He died in combating the army which king Pharaoh Necho led against him from the land of Egypt. But why this? Because, as we are told, the Lord had not forgot the fierceness of his anger kindled against Judah, by the provocations wherewithal Manasseh had offended him. And therefore was Josiah treated with this rigour. He was slain; and likewise three months afterwards, a son of his, called Jehoahaz, who had recently been chosen by the people as their sovereign, being in the interval deposed by Pharaoh Necho, and by him removed from Judah into Egypt. His next brother, called Eliakim, was, by the conquering king, advanced to fill his place; but had his name (on what account we know not), altered from Eliakim to that of Jakim, or as some translations of the Bible say, Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim

Jehoiakim was five and twenty years of age when he began to govern Judah, not as independent, but acknowledging himself and his dominion tributary to the king of Egypt.

CCCXXIV.

THE JEWS' SUBJECTION BY THE
KING OF BABYLON BEGUN.

ABOUT the time Jehoiakim began to reign, did Jeremiah and Uriah utter their predictions, which were levelled at Jerusalem, as mentioned in the six and twentieth chapter of the first named prophet, namely Jeremiah. They were both arraigned for venting prophecies of such a kind ; but Jeremiah saved his life ; whereas Uriah was condemned to death, and suffered.

Two years after this event, *videlicet*, six hundred and seven before Christ, succeeded in the empire of Assyria and Babylon, as coadjutor to his father, that Nebuchadnezzar mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel ; into whose hands God delivered up Jehoiakim, for acting evil in his sight. Jehoiakim was put in fetters, to be carried from Jerusalem to Babylon ; but promising to be a faithful tributary, he was left
at

at liberty behind, and so continued for the period of three years.

And thus were all the people of the Jews made captives: their captivity continued seventy years, as Jeremiah, in his twenty-fifth and twenty-ninth chapters, prophesied would be the case; for shortly after, was their transportation into Babylon effected, with whatever of the furniture and vessels of the temple it was thought expedient should be brought away.

CCCXXV. CCCXXVI.

DANIEL ii.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DANIEL,
SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND
ABEDNEGO, AT BABYLON, AND
NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM EX-
PLAINED.

BEFORE CHRIST 603.

SCENE. *A room of state in the Palace at Babylon.*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR on his throne, CHALDE-
ANS and OFFICERS attending.

First CHALDEAN.

LIVE, O king, for ever! You have had a dream, you say, that troubles you so far as to affect your slumber. Tell us, then, the dream, and we your servants, the Chaldeans, will explain it.

Nebuchadnezzar. Still will you return continually to that point, and thwart me in this manner? I have told you more than once already, that the vision hath escaped my recollection; therefore, once again, I tell you, that

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unless

unless you make it known, together with the explanation, you shall every one be cut in pieces, and your houses made as many dung-hills. But provided you supply my want of recollection, and disclose the dream, you shall, in that case, have rewards and honours.

Second Chaldean. Let not our demand, O king, if we insist thereon, offend; for what more reasonable than to ask the dream, upon condition of no mercy if we do not give the interpretation?

Nebuchadnezzar. Yes, I see your purpose. You would gladly, if you could, gain time. I saw it likewise some days past. Know, therefore, that already I have sent forth messengers, who, when I hold my hand out, will rise up at once, and put the tribe of you to death, who call yourselves wise men, but are not so, unless you can make known this dream; which, if you fail in, there is only one decree for every individual of you. See then to it.

First Chaldean. We are in a grievous state to-day; and therefore, though against our will, are we constrained to speak. There never was a man on earth that could perform what we are called on to perform; nor was there ever any king before, that asked so great a difficulty at the hand of his Chaldeans or astrologers.

The

The gods alone, whose dwellings are not with mankind, can satisfy the king.

Nebuchadnezzar. Talk you ;—but what means Arioch, that he comes thus hastily into our presence? He it is we ordered at our signal to go forth, and put to death these falsely named wise men. Can he already have performed his charge?

Arioch (entering). Health and long life attend the king. I have discovered a young man among the Jewish captives, that will tell this dream, and its interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar. Say you so? A Jewish captive! And his name?

Arioch. Is Daniel, since called Belteshazzar.

Nebuchadnezzar. Belteshazzar?

Arioch. Belteshazzar. He is one of those, who, when your royal father subjugated Judah, and removed the people of it hither, was selected from among them.

Nebuchadnezzar. Yes, I recollect the whole. My father ordered Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to select * the choicest youth in Judah he could meet with, either of the royal blood, or noble with respect to birth, and universally applauded for their wit and beauty, who, when tutored in the tongue and sciences of our Chaldeans, might be qualified to serve him in his

palace. Ashpenaz performed this charge; and brought away, as I remember now, this Belteshazzar, and three more, whose names were changed to those of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Am I not right in this?

Arioch. Quite so, my liege.

Nebuchadnezzar. Go on then, and inform me further.

Arioch. That, my lord, am I about to do; and more particularly, since this Belteshazzar, by my order, is preparing to appear before you, as I judge you would not have his coming any length of time delayed, and he may quickly be expected. Rumours had gone forth of my commission; therefore, came this Belteshazzar to me, scarce an hour yet past, and said as follows: We have heard (both I and my companions Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) of the king's design to take away so many lives, if *that* should not be speedily made known, which certainly is far beyond the compass of man's knowledge to discover; and to spare such bloodshed, hath the God of Israel, whom we serve, revealed it to me on my bed last night. Conduct me, therefore, to the king; for in your hearing do I pledge myself, O captain, to preserve the wise men's lives, and satisfy the king.

Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar. Did Belteshazzar, of his own accord, say this?

Arioch. He did, my liege; and look, where he is entering.

Nebuchadnezzar. Yes, I see him.—(*To Daniel coming in*). Belteshazzar is your name? Come hither: Are you able to make known my dream, and tell me what it means?

Daniel. This secret, in reality, the astrologers, magicians, and Chaldeans cannot of themselves make known; but still there is a God in heaven, who, by this vision, hath made known, what in succeeding years shall come to pass. You saw before you a great image, bright and terrible: its head was of the purest gold: its arms of silver, and its belly with the thighs of brass; its legs of iron, and its feet of iron mixed with clay.

Nebuchadnezzar. This was my dream indeed. I recollect the whole, and am astonished.

Daniel. You kept gazing on this image, till a stone from some near quarry, but not hewn with mortal hands, was hurled against the feet; of which, the greater part was clay: when instantly, the figure fell to pieces, and became like chaff upon the threshing-floor, and which the wind dispersed; while, on the other hand, the stone became a mountain, that filled all the earth.

earth. This was the dream, O king, and this is its interpretation. You are mighty in the earth ; for God hath given you strength and glory, and what represented you, about the statue, was its head of gold. But after you, shall rise another * kingdom, which the silver is a type of ; not so strong as yours ; and then, a third of brass, which shall bear empire over all the earth : but in the fourth place shall another rise, and no less strong than iron, to resist the hand of time : but forasmuch as you beheld the feet were made of clay and iron, this last kingdom shall be soon divided, yet in part possess the strength of iron in it. And once more ; whereas you saw the clay and iron mix together, so shall those who live in this fourth kingdom, mingle with the seed of men among their neighbours ; but not cleave to one another, just as that same metal cannot be disposed to mingle or incorporate itself with clay. And in the time of these four kingdoms, shall God's power set up another, whose duration is to know no limits. It shall not descend to other people, but consume its neighbours. And, in

* Daniel interprets this vision as a figure of those four great empires ; namely, first, the Babylonian, secondly, the Persian, thirdly, the Macedonian ; and, fourthly, the Roman, that should afterwards rise up amongst mankind.

fine,

fine, because the stone was hurled against the image without human hands, this is a token that not man, but God hath told you by my lips what is to come to pass hereafter. Certain is the dream, and certain likewise the interpretation of it.

Nebuchadnezzar. Both are certain: And most true must I confess it, Belteshazzar, that your God is in reality a God of gods, since you alone could tell me any thing upon the subject of this dream, and thereupon inform me of all this. For such communication, thanks; and if there be a favour you would sue for in behalf of any one, let it be known. Not for yourself; I knowing best what gratitude is suited to the services thus done, but in behalf of those you may account your friends.

Daniel. The merit is not found with me. I have but spoke what God inspired me to make known; and yet, O king, if you are graciously disposed to kindness, let my brother captives, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, of whom you have, no doubt, heard speak,—let them, on this occasion, be partakers of your bounty.

Nebuchadnezzar. It shall be so. I will set them over the affairs of Babylon; and as for you, that have surpassed in knowledge the wise

men dispersed through every quarter of our kingdom—be you, for the future, their chief ruler. Blow the trumpet, and proclaim him through the city. Lead on, captain: and the rest in order follow.

CCCXXVII.

FURTHER HISTORY OF THE JEWS,
TILL THE COMMENCEMENT OF
THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE PRO-
PHESIED BY DANIEL.

THREE years after the preceding explanation of the vision just before made mention of did Nebuchadnezzar send an army of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites against Jehoiachin, who, after the indulgence shewn him, as already intimated, proved rebellious to this conqueror. They laid waste Judea, and came back with upwards of three thousand captives, of which number, king Jehoiachin was one; but *him*, before they left Jerusalem, they put to death, then caused his carcase to be dragged with ignominy through the gate (as Jeremiah in his six and thirtieth chapter prophesied), and left it uninterred without the walls.

Jehoiachin

Jehoiachin his son (called also Conias, and Jeconias), at the age of eighteen years succeeded him. His reign continued in Jerusalem no longer than three months; for God beholding him pursue his father's wicked ways, stirred up the king of Babylon to punish him, by coming forth a second time against Jerusalem. He did so, and besieged it, as is mentioned in the four and twentieth of the second book of Kings. Jehoiachin, with all his kinsfolk, came to meet him; but he made them prisoners, and laid waste the temple, took away whatever treasure he could find therein, as well as in the palace, and destroyed the furniture and vessels which king Solomon had made, and put into the house of God. This being done, he took his prisoners, to the amount of twenty thousand souls, among which number were Jehoiachin, his wives, and mother, with the priest Ezekiel, and one Mordecai (very likely *that*, which will be spoken of hereafter), and returned to Babylon, first crowning Mattaniah, uncle to Jehoiachin, as sovereign of the Jewish people left behind, and who, in general, were only of the poorer sort, but changing, as was usual in such case, his name from Mattaniah into Zedekiah.

Zedekiah had attained the age of twenty,

one, when he was thus made king ; and *he* too, after he had reigned eleven years, by his rebellion, or to mend the expression, by continuing, as his fathers had before him done, to anger the Almighty, brought upon Jerusalem, and all the Jewish nation, those calamities, of which he had so frequently forewarned them by his prophets ; for, in the five hundred and eighty-eighth year before Christ, Jerusalem was once again assaulted by the king of Babylon, and utterly laid waste by his Chaldean troops : the wretched Zedekiah fled away by night ; but being instantly pursued and taken, met with that deplorable reverse of fortune, which hereafter will be mentioned.

As for both the city, and God's house, the first was made a heap of ruins, and the latter burnt to ashes ; while the few that had before been left within it, were transported by the conquering king to Babylon : and thus was Judah captived four hundred and sixty-eight years after David began to reign over it, three hundred and eighty-eight after the extinction of the ten tribes, and nearly seven score after the destruction of the realm of Israel.

HOLY

HOLY WRIT FAMILIARIZED

TO

JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE SIXTH AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLES CCCXXVIII. CCCXXIX.

APOCRYPHA.

- * SUSANNA'S INNOCENCE MADE
KNOWN, AND DANIEL'S RIGHT-
EIOUS JUDGMENT.

TIME UNKNOWN, BUT NEARLY AFTER THE
COMMENCEMENT OF THE BABYLONIAN
EMPIRE.

SCENE. *A garden.*

First ELDER.

ONCE more I tell you, brother elder, it
is nearly now about the time when this
Sufanna, of whose beauty we are both ena-

* The time when this attack upon Sufanna was attempted,
is not known: the story is recorded in the Apocrypha, and
there described as set apart from the *beginning* of the book of
Daniel, and not with it; since not written in the Hebrew.

moured, will come hither, as for many days she has been used to do, and this too is the place where constantly she bathes.

Second Elder. Yes, yes, I know that well: but what we greatly hope for, we as greatly fear will not take place. Thus is it with respect to me, and our Susanna. Yes, once more let me repeat those words I have made use of—*our Susanna*; for whereas, in secret, we both longed to get possession of her person, without either of us chusing to confide his longing to the other, we did well to think she had about her a sufficiency of beauty for two men's desires, when unexpectedly we met together in this garden, both intent on the enjoyment of Susanna, though already, for these many noon-days past, we had thus placed ourselves in ambush for that purpose. Yes, well did we, to consider in this manner of her charms, and join our fortunes, neither of us wishing to become the other's rival, but assist his views.

First Elder. Would all do so that covet female charms, the world would not afford so many instances of tragical adventures as take place among us daily, and have every one their origin in love. What contradiction, that a passion, meant, no doubt, to mitigate the troubles of this life, should lay the ground-work of so many sorrows!

Second

Second Elder. Nothing in reality can be more lamentable; but, to talk of our design upon Susanna.—Sometimes, I am not without my fears, when I reflect, that should we make attempt upon her virtue, and not prosper, we shall undergo the greater odium, being judges of the people.

First Elder. True; but then our place and function will obtain us credit with them, and our voice, denying what we may be charged with, will have more authority among them than Susanna's voice, if she should venture to accuse us. This is Joacim her husband's garden. I begin, myself, to think her long in coming. Sure she is not gone elsewhere?

Second Elder. Break off. I see her coming; yonder, at the bottom door. This is the spot she cannot chuse but come to; and on that account, if for no other, was our place of ambush wisely fixed on here. Let us betake ourselves thereto; for she is nigh at hand. Look not, or we may be discovered. And now, brother, for the pleasure we have both been long expecting!—But no more.—(*They retire among the bushes, and Susanna, after they are hid, draws nigh*).

Susanna. This is the place. I am alone, but safe: I knew so, after I had shut the garden gate,

gate, or hardly should have bid my maid go up into the house, and bring me down my wash balls thence.

First Elder (aside to the Second). How lucky that for us!

Second Elder (aside). And that we know her maid is gone upon the errand to the house, which is some distance off!

First Elder (aside). Yes, so that we may gratify our wish, while she remains away. What then prevents us issuing forth this moment?

Second Elder (aside). Nay, I know not: let us shew ourselves. (*They appear, at which Susanna shrieks*). Forbear, or you are ruined, beautiful Susanna. Do you know us? Speak: and be not frightened; for provided you consent to our request, we will not harm you.

Susanna. O great God! where am I?

First Elder. We have not much time to lose; but *had* we, ceremony would be out of season. Know then plainly that we love you.

Second Elder. Yes, we swear we do: and if you will but grant us what we would not name——

Susanna. Oh heaven!

Second Elder. We know not what we will refuse to do, if it may gratify you.

Susanna.

Susanna. Gratify me? Help, help, some one!

First Elder. Hear us, nor begin to cry out thus, before we hurt you. Be advised; and think not to alarm the house. If you cry out again, and any hear you, think what possibly may follow. Will you hear us while we speak?

Susanna. If you compel me so to do, I must.

First Elder. Why that's well said! In one word then, consent to lie with us; for we are both in love at the idea only of such beauty. Satisfy us therefore, and claim any thing our love can give.

Second Elder. But if you will not satisfy us, we will both bear witness that we caught you dallying with a youth; first, for the sake of greater safety, having sent away your maid.

Susanna. Alas! alas! I am on every side distressed; for if I do this thing, it will expose me to a cruel death: and if I do it not, in that case, I shall hardly extricate myself in safety from your hands: It is, however, better I should brave the peril threatening me in consequence of your contrivance with each other, than commit so dreadful an offence in the Almighty's sight. Once more then, let the consequence be what it may, I will cry out.
Help!

Help! help there! Is there none at hand to hear me?

First Elder. She is desperate, I see. We have not prospered, but must think of our own safety.

Second Elder. Yes, I understand you. So help there! help! help!

Susanna. What mean they?

First Elder. You will very soon see that. Here come the servants of the house, and Joacim, I think.

Susanna. What will their perfidy advance against me. I am guiltless of the sin they would accuse me of. *That*, heaven well knows, but then, I shake all over, just as if I were condemned already. God defend me from their machinations.

Enter JOACIM, the Maid that left SUSANNA at the garden gate, and other Servants.

Joacim. What means all this crying out? Has any thing extraordinary happened?

First Elder. Yes, good Joacim. Your wife, that woman there, has been this morning violating her late marriage vow. We saw the whole.

Second Elder. Oh worthy Joacim, our story will affect you both with grief and indignation: but however friendship might conceal delinquency,

quency, yet being judges, we are not at liberty to act as we might wish to act, and, therefore, every thing must out, which is as follows: We were just now walking here, to screen ourselves from the intolerable ardour of the sun, and no one, at our entrance, as we thought, was in the garden, but it soon proved otherwise, for this same woman, let us call her so much rather than your wife, came in, attended by a servant, whom she sent away immediately, and coughing once or twice,—her signal; for no less we found it quickly after,—was replied to by a beautiful young man (if you will call *him* beautiful, that could have been on such a wicked business), who that moment issuing from this place, where he was hid, came up, and had communication with her. We, then, being in a corner of the garden, saw this scene, and ran to apprehend the youth; but he proved far too active for us, and, by running to the garden gate, got out; on which, returning to the woman, we enquired his name and kindred, but she would not tell us.

First Elder. This do I bear witness to; for I beheld it likewise.

Josacim. Am I in a dream, or waking? In my chamber, or this garden? But all circumstances join to tell me I am miserable.

The Maid.

The Maid. Possibly——

Joachim. No, no ; though' as a faithful servant, you should sorrow for your mistress ; yet forbear to intimate she may not in this manner have offended. You were sent away. Why so, but to afford her opportunity of sinning with the paramour she had before hand set her heart on ? Then too, would these Elders lie ? Would they, who have so often dealt out justice to the people, at my house whenever they resorted to it, would they charge her falsely ? Is she not herself confounded ? Every thing alas ! is far too obvious. Guilt is in her face.

Susanna. Am I then thought my own accuser ? I have hitherto, and I confess it, stood confounded ; for this accusation certainly sufficed to make me so. But what would you have thought, had I been bold and ready to reply when taxed so foully ? My confusion, therefore, is a proof that I am innocent. Let not my husband then forsake me, and make one with those that, having sought themselves to stain my honour, have set up this accusation to destroy me.

First Elder. She accuses us ! Oh horrible !

Second Elder. Most horrible ! But God forgive her.

Joachim. You do well to pray for one who would

would destroy herself.—Sufanna,—wife let me no longer call you, since all former tenderness has this day's horrid business done away between us.—You are guilty, and the law of Moses will not let you live: My place in Babylon is such, that if I were disposed to countenance injustice, I am not not at liberty to do so. You must die.

Sufanna. Oh heaven! oh heaven!

Joachim. And instantly; therefore confess your sin, nor think to hide it by accusing these two worthy men.

Sufanna (falling on her knees). O everlasting God, who knowest all things that shall be, as well as what have been, thou knowest they have borne evidence against me falsely. And for that am I to die?

First Servant. Alas! alas!

The Maid. Our mistress is not guilty, I am certain. What! a woman of her modesty, thus play the adulterers! These old men are liars. I am certain they are so.

Sufanna (still kneeling). O God! protector of the innocent, and refuge they may fly to,—
(A noise without).

Joachim. What is going forward that I hear such shoutings?

First Servant. By the noise becoming louder
every

every moment, some one I am sure must be approaching. Yes, as I conjectured, he advances ; and who is it ?

Second Servant. Heaven ! the famous Belteshazzar ! He is coming. Possibly to vindicate Susanna ; for who knows but that his God has sent him !

First Servant. Listen, therefore, and heaven grant it be as you imagine.

Enter DANIEL, with a crowd of people after him.

First Servant. By his attitude he is preparing to say something.

Daniel. Which is she, whose prayer the God of Israel has vouchsafed, and sent me to deliver her ? Yes, wonder not that I express myself in this wise ; for I come not of my own accord. I am sent purposely for the relief of injured innocence. This is the accused one ; but her suppliant posture makes that evident enough. You Elders, as you call yourselves, are her accusers, and you likewise are her husband. In the first place, therefore (*to Susanna*), quit that kneeling posture, and take comfort ; for God's goodness hath vouchsafed your prayer ; and in the next place, I appear to tell you, Joacim, that I am clear of this poor woman's blood, though, by the king, appointed Judge in Babylon.

Joacim.

Joacim. What means my lord? Does Belthazzar call me guilty of her blood? Can it be thought that notwithstanding I have sentenced her, I wished to have it so? I have done every thing, not as a vengeful, but afflicted husband. Would to God I could, with justice, save her from the death she has deserved!

Daniel. Could you evince yourself so blind as, without knowledge of the truth, or due examination, to doom innocence to death. These Elders, her accusers, have borne evidence against her falsely; nay, attempted first that crime for which she is herself thus sentenced.

First Servant. Is it possible!

Daniel. And, in the next place, she had not recourse for safety to recrimination. Had not God dispatched me hither, what would then have been your future situation, when the innocence of your beloved spouse had been made evident.

Joacim. You talk, my lord, as if you were indeed commissioned to restore me my lost peace of mind. Oh if that be but possible, suspend this sentence, and re-judge the beautiful culprit, seeing God has, by his power, advanced you likewise to the honour of an Elder.

Daniel.

Daniel. Yes ; for to re-judge an injured woman am I sent. Put, therefore, these two men apart, that they may not exchange a word with one another. Take him first away (*pointing to the first Elder*).

First Elder (as he goes out). Oh I fear nothing.

Daniel. Good (*To the second Elder*). Now come you here ; you, that are old in wickedness : but your abominable sins are brought to light ; for you have borne false witness, and done all you could to slay the innocent : for, granting you beheld the woman perpetrate this wickedness, beneath what tree did she and her companion do it ?

Second Elder (aside). What imports the question ? but I need not fear replying to it.— (*Aloud*), I observed, it was a mastick tree.

Daniel. Speak none of you, good people, while I manage the whole matter.—Very well : but by thus answering, you have lied in the Almighty's presence, and even now his angel has received commandment to lift up the sword, and cut in twain, not only you, but your companion likewise.—Put him now aside ; and let the other be brought in : but see that they commune not with each other, while I speak.— (*To the first Elder who is here brought in*). What !

You

You are come already : but for sentence ; that I am assured of.—Son of Canaan, and not Judah, beauty hath deceived you, and concupiscence beguiled your bosom ; but, undoubtedly, you have beforehand treated, in this manner, many daughters born to Israel, who, for fear, became associates with you, while this child of Judah would not be subservient to your wickedness. Inform me, therefore, by what tree did you surprize Sufanna and her partner in the crime with which you charge her ?

First Elder. By what tree ?—That, yonder.

Daniel. Do you mean the highest of those seven ? That is a holm tree.

First Elder. Well then, by that holm tree they were both together.

Daniel. O abominable hypocrite ! Thus is the mastic changed into a holm tree. Well then, by thus answering, you have likewise lied in the Almighty's presence, and even now his angel has received commandment to lift up the sword and funder you in twain.—(To Joacim). What think you, brother ?

Joacim. They are guilty, and the partner of my bed, thank God, is innocent !

First Elder. What shall we say ?

Daniel. Say nothing. You are guilty by your own confession, and your punishment, according

according to the law of Moses, must be such as you designed Susanna. Go then, miserable wretches, to your death; for by thus wickedly endeavouring to destroy the innocent, you have no plea to pity.

The Maid. Every thing is changed!

First Servant. Yes, God be thanked, who has preserved our mistress!

Jocim. I want words to shew what joy is in my heart: but oh! what pardon can my dear Susanna—

Susanna. Move not me for pardon, husband. My whole soul is so indebted to God's goodness, that my joy would be quite inconsistent with resentment. You supposed me guilty, and accordingly condemned me. Your proceeding was a noble indignation operating in you for the crime; and I can easily forgive it, when I pardon from my heart them too (*looking at the Elders*). I have escaped their malice, and the punishment they have already suffered in the presence of so many people, is sufficient for the sin they sought to perpetrate. Let me intreat then, that their death may be remitted them.

First Elder. What shall we say? We are detected, and crave mercy.

Daniel. You must not expect it. Your offence

fence has been enormous, and what ought to follow, but a punishment proportioned to it? Go then, once again, to death. Take them away; and you, Susanna, with your husband, give God thanks that every thing has been determined thus. Away, nor let the offenders speak.

CCCXXX.

DANIEL iii.

SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-
NEGO, DELIVERED FROM THE
FIERY FURNACE.

BEFORE CHRIST 580.

SCENE. *An open place.**Two* CHALDEANS.*First* CHALDEAN.

FULL fifteen years have Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, maintained themselves in that invidious state of exaltation, whereunto the king has raised them over us; but now, this fortunate occurrence of the image he has recently set up in Dura,

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will

will effect the overthrow of three at least among them. Belteshazzar, at some future time, we may contrive to make partaker with them of the king's displeasure.

Second Chaldean. Yes, we may do so indeed ; but, as for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we have the fullest evidence of their refusal to fall down before the image now set up.—
(*Trumpets at a distance*).

First Chaldean. Hark ! do you hear the trumpets ? At this moment, while we talk together, is the dedication of the statue going on. I heard the herald cry, as they are doing now, and will again to-morrow, three times every day : “ To
“ you it is commanded, O ye people, nations,
“ tongues, and languages, that when you hear
“ the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and
“ dulcimer, with every other kind of music, ye
“ fall prostrate, and adore the golden image
“ that king Nebuchadnezzar hath set up. And
“ whoso disobeyeth, shall be cast into the mid-
“ dle of a burning fiery furnace.”

Second Chaldean. What follows then, but that those upstarts, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, must undergo the sentence ?

First Chaldean. They have nothing else to look for ; and behold ! the moment of their fate draws nigh ; for lo, the king approaches.

Second

Second Chaldean. He is coming from the dedication of the image, and will meet the princes here. What then, if we prefer our accusation on the spot?

First Chaldean. Good! Good! Take you that office on you—and this instant—for behold, the king is here.

Enter NEBUCHADNEZZAR with his court.

Nebuchadnezzar. The dedication of this day hath been most solemnly conducted, and the worshippers, in number, were beyond belief.

Second Chaldean. And yet, O king,—for need we crave forgiveness of our zeal, excited by such piety, which others set at nought, and even scorn, while they behold it?—there are men, we mean those Jews, whom formerly your bounty and munificence set over the affairs of Babylon, called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that neither serve your gods, nor will this day bow down before the image you have dedicated.

Nebuchadnezzar. Is this true?

First Chaldean. In every point. Nay, not content with scorning your command, and keeping from this worship, we surpris'd them praying yesterday in their apartment, having each his face turned towards Jerusalem, while you, O monarch, were employed

in solemn worship here. We asked the reason of such contumacy, when they answered, they would do so likewise as this day, and on the following, while the dedication of our stupid god is going forward; for no other title can their sacrilege bestow on such a holy thing.

Nebuchadnezzar. Did their presumption go so far? Hence three or four of you: haste, apprehend the impious wretches, and this moment drag them hither. They shall die.—(*A guard goes out*).

Second Chaldean. The place is not far off; and we are sure they will be found, at present, in the exercise of their audacious worship; so determined are they, and disposed to counteract your just commands.

Nebuchadnezzar. The traitors! Are you sure they will not flee, when they behold our guard approaching?

First Chaldean. Never, never. They will rather, on the other hand, spring forth to meet them. Their religion has in some sort made them mad.

Nebuchadnezzar. Dare they then brave us in this manner! Let the furnace be made seven times hotter than for other criminals, that they may know what our insulted power can do.

Second Chaldean. As if there were not common

mon fires enough, which they might rush into, and not come hither to endure the hottest, in reserve for such rebellion! But the guard have done their business, and the criminals are nigh at hand. With what composure they proceed! or rather, one would think the guard can scarce restrain their ardour, though death stares them in the face!

Enter SHADRACH, MESHACH, and ABED-NEGO.

Nebuchadnezzar. Bring them along, that they may stand before our face.—Tell us if it be true that you refuse to serve our gods, and fall before the image we have just set up? Nay more, that while all Babylon is here engaged in solemn worship, you pray openly, and in defiance of our order, to another God? Think, therefore, whether he can save you from the burning fiery furnace, which even now is making seven times hotter to receive you, if, on hearing presently the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, with every other kind of music, you continue stedfastly refusing to fall down——

Shadrach. No more: We are not at a loss to answer upon this occasion.

Mesbach. No; for though we are aware what punishment your vengeance is preparing for us; even had we not been told as much, yet know,

we dare you to inflict it ; for our God is able to preserve us from your fury, and he will preserve us likewise.

Abednego. But if not ; and were we sure of perishing, we would not serve your gods, nor yet fall down before the image you have dedicated.

Nebuchadnezzar. Do you brave us thus ! Well, be it so ; for both your stubborn courage, and that power, which, as you boast, your God possesses to preserve you, shall endure a fiery trial. Hence—(*To the guard*). Away, and thrust them all into the furnace. Happily, it is not so far off, but my just rage will instantly be glutted, when I see them thrown into the fire. Away ; let them not speak, but see our pleasure done. (*Shadrach and his two companions are borne off*). And you, stand all apart, that we may see them going forward : their audacity precludes all pity ; and the gods, whose worship they have trampled on, command us to rejoice, while we behold them suffer. They have almost reached the furnace. Oh ! their courage will at last desert them. That we may be sure of.

First Chaldean (to the Second, while the king keeps looking towards the quarter, where the furnace is supposed to be). This is as it should be, brother ;

brother ; for a moment more, and three of our great enemies will be no longer.

Second Chaldean (aside to the First). True ; no longer will they mortify us, by displaying upon all occasions their superiority. Look now, they are arrived ; and now the officers are binding them. Ah ! now they thrust them in.

First Chaldean. And so there is an end of them.

Second Chaldean. The king is anxious to behold the execution of his orders. Ah ! (*starting*).

Nebuchadnezzar. What do I see ! The officers appointed to perform our pleasure, are, methinks, fallen down before the furnace ?—Yes, I cannot be mistaken.—What may be the meaning of all this ?

An Officer. Here comes a messenger with information.

Nebuchadnezzar. Yes, I see him, and the officers laid prostrate on the ground before the furnace where they fell. They must be surely dead !—(*To the Messenger coming in*). Well, Messenger, what ails them at the furnace ? What has happened ?

The Messenger. Oh, my lord ! the furnace, in compliance with your royal will, was heated

to a sevenfold pitch ; and what was the result ? Why, death to those who had the charge of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The flame, forth issuing at the furnace door, when it was opened to receive the criminals, laid hold that moment of their executioners, and in an instant they fell down. — Behold, O king ! for you may hence descry them lying on the ground.

Nebuchadnezzar. I do : But of the culprits ? —

The Messenger. There too is another wonder. They are singing hymns, and walking up and down within the furnace, just as if it were some pleasant garden.

Nebuchadnezzar. Yes, indeed, I see it, though imperfectly : but wherefore have they left the furnace door unshut ?

The Messenger. My lord, the flames come out with so much fury through the door way, that they cannot shut it. Neither dares a single individual of the crowd draw near enough to pull away the bodies, that lie scorching at the opening of the furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar. The Almighty's finger is in this. Haste, messenger, and do what only now is to be done. Bid Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come hither. I repent of what is past. — (*After the Messenger is gone out*). I see them

them through the door way ; and to make the event more wonderful, discern another walking with them, who looks just as if he were a Son of God.

First Chaldean (aside to the Second). What think you now ?

Second Chaldean. Nay, ask some other ; for I know not.

First Chaldean. What I know is, that at least we shall be disappointed of our expectation. Who would have supposed it ! They are coming.

Nebuchadnezzar. They have left the furnace : but the fourth, who must have been their guardian angel, is not with them : he has vanished. What a miracle ! Our gods could never have produced it.—(To Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who enter). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, whom now I must acknowledge servants of the living God, come hither. I repent of my misguided fury. Oh what wonder to be thrust into a fiery furnace, and not have a hair upon your heads even singed, nor yet your clothes discoloured, nor the smell of burning passed upon you ! This can be the ordering only of a God. Let then the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, be blessed for ever, who hath sent his angel, and delivered those that trusted in him, that they should

not worship any but himself. I publish, therefore, my decree, that such, as utter any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall instantly be cut in pieces, and their houses made as many dung-hills, since no power can in this signal manner save from danger those who fear him. Come away, and for this wrong, with which your virtue has been treated, be convinced of a repenting monarch's sorrow by the further exaltation he designs you. Follow to the palace.

CCCXXXI. CCCXXXII.

ABEDNEGO'S CONFESSION IN THE
FURNACE, WITH HIS OWN AND
FELLOW-SUFFERERS' SONG.

IN the Apocrypha, the writer tells us, that they walked together in the middle of the fire, and that Abednego began his prayer, thus verified :

Lord both of earth and heaven, who from
thy throne
Look'ft on our tribes, considering them thy own,
Worthy of utmost praise from ev'ry tongue,
Conscious of that great Power whence first we
sprung,

Is thy great name, in whom conspicuous shine
 Justice and truth ; for they are only thine.
 Sorrow in all things, hast thou made us know,
 And thy late holy temple now laid low ;
 Yet justly is our bitter doom dispens'd,
 Since with our sins thy love we have incens'd :
 Therefore, beneath the deadly power and hate
 Of a fierce foe, hast thou reduced our state :
 Of a fierce foe, than whom, earth's region round,
 Sure never a more fierce poor vassals found
 And now, in our own cause are we struck dumb,
 Nor dare we with excuse before thee come :
 For great has been our sins ; and, therefore, they
 Who love thee, and thy sacred laws obey,
 Laugh at us, or at least, our state forlorn
 Think of with pity, bordering upon scorn.

Yet for thy name's sake, let not our fierce foe
 Entirely in the dust our heads lay low ;
 Be not thy covenant, in times long past
 Made between thee and them, annull'd at last,
 Nor thy accustom'd mercy from them take,
 But spare us for thy once lov'd Abraham's sake,
 For Jacob's and for Israel's too, whose race
 Should, as thou swar'st, increase thro' earth's
 wide space,
 Till, like unnumber'd sands upon the shore
 Or all heav'n's stars, men should not count
 them o'er.

But now, are we become a wretched few,
 Than the least nation less, and feeble too,
 And for our sins, bow'd down in ev'ry land
 Where scatter'd, we endure thy heavy hand:
 For we have now no chief, no prince, no seer,
 No temple to thy worship sacred here,
 No incense, no burnt off'ring, no fix'd place
 Where gather'd, we may supplicate thy grace.

But with a contrite heart and humble mind,
 Acceptance from thy mercy let us find;
 And in our own sad state, for thy great name
 Doom'd as we are to this devouring flame,
 As on the off'ring of young bulls and rams,
 And the sweet favour of ten thousand lambs,
 So on our sacrifice, well pleas'd look down,
 And with thy glory our sharp anguish crown:
 For ne'er shalt thou permit that shame o'ertake
 Those, who, as we do, suffer for thy sake;
 But from the treasures of thy goodness pour,
 Mercies into their cup, till it run o'er.
 So let us mercy find; and glory then
 Shall to thy name be given by awe-struck men.
 See not with shame thy servants urg'd to death,
 Nor in these torments let us yield our breath,
 But humble the proud foe, confound at length
 Our tyrants, and bring down their boasted
 strength.

So,

So, to the nations round, shall men make
 known
Who, in the heaven of heavens, his glorious
 throne,
 Rules the whole world eternal and alone.

Such was the supplication of Abednego; while, as the sacred writer tells us, those who had, by order, put Abednego into the furnace, with his two companions, ceased not from the work of feeding it with Naphtha, pitch, and other like combustibles, in such a manner, that the flame streamed forth above it nine and forty cubits, burning those Chaldeans that were standing nigh. Moreover, as the word continues, there came down an angel to support or comfort Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who smote the flame within the furnace, so that it could neither hurt nor trouble them; on which, the three, as if they had been speaking with one mouth, together praised and glorified their Maker; saying:

God of our fathers, to thy name be giv'n
 Worship by ev'ry tongue in earth and heav'n:
 Thee, let whatever thou hast form'd, adore
 God as thou art, God blest for evermore.
 Great on thy glorious throne art thou, O Lord,
 Worthy and to be prais'd with one accord.

By

By the whole race of men, whose search, tho'
join'd

Of thy transcendent works no end could find.

Blest art thou in the heavens; whence, look-
ing down

O'er the wide deep, thou tak'st a smile or frown,

As into peace its waters thou wouldst 'suage,

Or the fierce waves work up to seven fold rage.

Blest art thou in all these; and all beside,

Thro' thy creation's range, a space so wide;

Let ev'ry thing then praise thy holy name.—

Praise him, ye heavens, thro' your extended
frame:

Praise him, ye angels, that perform his will:

Praise him, ye waters, that the expansion fill:

Praise him, ye powers, subordinate in sway:

Praise him, thou moon by night, and sun by day:

Praise him, ye stars, a bright tho' silent train:

Praise him, ye showers, that quench the thirsty
plain:

Praise him, ye winds, that from each quarter
blow:

Praise him, ye fires on high, and earth below:

Praise him, thou winter chill, and summer fair:

Praise him, ye storms, that rend the troubled air:

Praise him, ye nights and days, as ye come
round:

Praise him, thou ice, with which the streams are
bound:

Praise

Praise him, ye snows, that half the world invest :
 Praise him, ye clouds, in gold or azure drest :
 Praise him, thou earth ; praise God that rules
 on high :

Praise him, ye mountains, that ascend the sky :
 Praise him, ye vegetable tribes, that grow :
 Praise him, ye fountains, that in secret flow :
 Praise him, ye seas and streams' more obvious
 tide :

Praise him, ye fish, that thro' their channels
 glide :

Praise him, ye fowl, that fly ten thousand ways :
 Praise him, ye cattle, that earth's surface graze :
 Praise him, ye numerous children of mankind :
 Praise him, ye Israelites, in heart and mind :
 Praise him, ye priests, that publish his high will :
 Praise him, ye servants, that his law fulfil :
 Praise him, ye righteous men, now sunk in
 death :

Praise him, ye righteous men, that still draw
 breath :

Praise him, we likewise ; for the tyrant's aim
 Has he annull'd, and turn'd aside the flame ;
 Yea, from the depths of hell our souls kept free ;
 For of his mercy can no limits be.

CCCXXXIII. CCCXXXIV.

DANIEL iv.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR DRIVEN INTO
THE WILDERNESS, AND AFTER-
WARD RESTORED.

BEFORE CHRIST 563.

SCENE. *A wilderness.*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

OH the admirable uses of adversity! When, from the capital of my dominion, I surveyed it saying, "Is not this great Babylon: that I have built," I had no thought of God: but having now been seven long years afflicted, I am sensible I am no better than a worm, as God alone hath universal empire. It is meet, indeed, that every tongue should publicly confess his government, and every knee bow down before his grandeur. He hath proved his grandeur in the punishment inflicted on my past denials of his power. My body, every morning wetted with the dews of heaven, the hair upon it grown like eagles' feathers, and my nails as pointed as their claws, yet, on the other hand,

hand, my life and being, notwithstanding so much wretchedness, continued. These are circumstances that point out his power. And to his power, thus manifested during seven long years, is he at present adding tokens of his mercy, in this restoration of my faculties; for praised be his name, my reason is returning to me, and so long, yea ever since I mingled with the brutes about me, having been a beast myself, I am at length become again a man. But what do I behold! A company of men! of men! and in a wilderness, where I have never yet seen any creature of my kind! Sure they are sent to do some errand appertaining to the miracle now wrought upon me; and the God, who has again restored me to my understanding, will again restore me to my kingdom likewise.

—But suppose they should not come on such a business? yea, suppose they should design to kill me? Is not such a matter to be feared? Ah me! how helpless is man's nature! I, that was a king, am now beneath the meanest of the mean that were my subjects. They seem seeking some one, and must think him hereabouts; their manner of proceeding intimates no less; and who, except myself, in such a place as this is, can that *some one* be? What were it best to do? Shall I be prudent,

and

and take every measure to preserve my life? Do I then stand in fear of death, thus miserable as my life has been? I do, and find that now, when there is reason to conjecture I may lose it, brutal though it has been, still is it possessed of many charms, and I would gladly live still longer. I will then retire into this thicket. I may gather something as they pass me, and find out, if, in reality, their visit here is of a hostile nature. They are almost on the spot, and I have not a moment's time to lose, unless I wish to draw their observation. I will therefore in. Let me be quick; for they are close upon me. (*Speaking within the thicket, and unseen*). I shall here elude their search, if they are come to injure me. If otherwise, I can with ease step forth and shew myself.

Enter several BABYLONIANS.

First Babylonian. How solitary is this place: In such a wilderness, can he have passed away seven years? Yet Belteshazzar, who speaks only as his God inspires him, tells us so; and we must not be easily fatigued in seeking for him.

Second Babylonian. Fatigued I am already; but will not on that account alone give over; for on our part, surely, loyal is it to relieve our king in his affliction. Yet this quarter of the wilderness

wilderness invites us to repose ourselves a little. Let us therefore sit a while. We can, whenever we think proper, rise and recommence our search. What say you, friends, to my proposal?

Third Babylonian. That with all my heart, I second it.

First Babylonian. And I too, more particularly so, as we are here, safe sheltered from the sun, that cannot pierce the foliage round about.

Second Babylonian (with the others sitting down). Poor king! Would we could find the place of his retreat!

Third Babylonian. Or rather, you should say, would we had known before, he was still living! Belteshazzar hid it from us; and what thought could we have had that any one were capable of life seven years, sequestered from society, and *that* too in so wild a desert?

First Babylonian. The prediction, as we cannot but remember, was as follows: that this God, whom Belteshazzar serves, should drive our master from the company of men: but then, before his disappearance, a whole year had passed; and it was easy for us to forget the very terms in which this prophecy was uttered. —

Third

Third Babylonian. While we tarry here, good friends, pray tell me the whole fortune that has happened to our exiled monarch, from the first, as far as you remember, to the moment of his disappearance. I had then, and long before this prophecy of Belteshazzar, my abode within the ruined city of Jerusalem, where I was stationed on the public service, and could therefore hardly know of the event: but you may to the full inform me; and what better can we talk of, than this business?

First Babylonian. You shall hear it, as you wish, from me, who then enjoyed an office in the court, and can as perfectly remember each particular, as if it had but been transacted yesterday. Our master, by the wonder of that fiery furnace, which took no effect on those three men, called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who had been thrown into it, was awakened to a knowledge of the God, whom, in his proclamations, he was used to call the true and only God: but former infidelities, it seems, since he himself was used to say so, were not yet atoned for, and a punishment remained to be inflicted. As a prelude to this punishment, full often were his thoughts, as we remember, troubled; and at length he had this dream, not once alone, but frequently repeated.

peated. He beheld, and lo a tree sprung up, whose height was very great.

Second Babylonian. So great that it reached up to heaven!

First Babylonian. It did so; and spread also far and near: the fruit thereof was in abundance, and the foliage very fair; so much so, that not only it afforded fruit to every creature, but the birds and beasts were sheltered under, and among, its branches. In its beauty, it seemed likely to withstand the injuries of time, that ruins all things: notwithstanding which, the king beheld a holy one (for such was his expression), rapidly come down from heaven, and heard him in his flight cry out: " Hew
 " down the tree, and lop off all its branches.
 " Scatter wide the leaves; disperse the fruit.
 " Let all the beasts be gone from under it, and
 " fright away the birds: but leave its roots
 " still fastened in the earth, even with a band
 " of brass and iron in the tender grass at present growing round about it. Let the dews
 " of heaven from day to day descend upon it,
 " and its portion be among the beasts, till
 " seven successive seasons have begun, and
 " ended. This is the good-will of God; that
 " every living soul may know who ruleth in
 " the kingdoms of mankind, though frequently
 " he

“ he sets the basest over them to govern.” And at this, the king was ever wont to wake in sorrow.

Third Babylonian. This then was his dream?

First Babylonian. It was ; but none of the magicians or Chaldeans could interpret it, till Belteshazzar, being sent for, came ; and by his skill in divination, which is great, explained the vision, as importing that the king, who by the tree was represented, should be driven out from men, should have his dwelling with brute beasts, should feed on grass like oxen, and for seven whole years together should be wet each morning with the dews of heaven, but in the end, however, be restored to govern. This was the interpretation put upon his dream by Belteshazzar, who concluded to the following purport, speaking with a courage that could only be the effect of inspiration. “ Let not therefore my advice, O king, displease you : “ namely, that you break off all your sins by “ righteousness, and your iniquity by shewing “ mercy to the poor, which possibly may “ lengthen your tranquillity.” Here Belteshazzar ended, whose prediction, as it was not speedily accomplished, slept in some sort, disregarded, even by the king ; who, notwithstanding, a year after, disappeared. He disappeared ;

appeared ; yet were we far from recollecting the past prophecy, or that such disappearance was the accomplishment thereof. How could we possibly not recollect it ? how indeed, unless that Belteshazzar's God, who must be owned more powerful than the gods of Babylon, decreed it, lest a spirit of affection should excite us to go forth, and by discovery of our monarch in the forest, whither he had thrust him from among us, disappoint his purpose.

Second Babylonian. Be it so ; for now, seven years have passed away, nor should we even yet have dreamed of our unhappy monarch's situation, had not Belteshazzar, by commandment from his God, apprized us of it ; after which, it was not needful we should be directed to come forth in quest of our liege king, and finding out where he has taken up his melancholy dwelling, bring him back to rule in all his former splendour, over subjects waiting with anxiety in every quarter for the hour of his return.

Third Babylonian. Alas ! alas ! Your story has affected me ; and every grief our sovereign has been made to suffer, at this moment is become my own. How has not *he* then suffered ? Miserable man ! Seven long long years, and not a human being to consort with, during the whole time !

time! O friends, let us no longer, for the sake of our own ease, delay this search, till we have found him; for too long already has he suffered, and been wretched. Let us up then, and resume our journey forward.

First Babylonian. You reprove us properly. Let us forget ourselves, that we may think of our unhappy monarch only.

Second Babylonian. This is the best way, methinks. We cannot fail at last to find him, being, as we are, so many. Come, and having got to younger coppice, let us strike again into as many different directions, as the number of our company admits.—(*As they are going out, Nebuchadnezzar quits his hiding place*).

Nebuchadnezzar. O friends! Stay. Turn. Your king, if you will own him in this state, is here.—

First Babylonian. Our king?

Second Babylonian. I am astonished!

Third Babylonian. Have we found our sovereign?

Nebuchadnezzar. Yes; among the brutes, good friends, and sunk into a brute himself.

First Babylonian. O royal sir! are we so happy, as thus early to have found you?

Nebuchadnezzar. Rather let me say, Am I so happy as, in this wise, to be sought for, after
seven

seven years absence from all creatures of my kind? O friends, in this drear solitude has been my habitation ever since the day I was driven out from Babylon.

Second Babylonian. Above seven years! But you will quickly be restored to Babylon and your liege subjects, who will every one shed tears at your return.

Nebuchadnezzar. Are they so loyal then? Small reason have they hitherto experienced to be happy in the presence of their king; but they shall not henceforward find it so; for, since the time of my seclusion here from all men, I have learned to govern mercifully; and this wilderness has been a school to teach me. Yes, thus distant from mankind, have I been taught how I should live among mankind.

Third Babylonian. Dear sovereign, talk not thus: but let us think of our return to Babylon, which we can never reach too soon.

Nebuchadnezzar. Take, take me. I am yours, to do with as you please. And yet, let me first bid farewell to this sad place, where I have so long lived. Alas! while I was happy in my palace, I should never have imagined I could brook the hardships of a desert: but necessity does much, and hardships are become familiar to me.

First Babylonian. We delay too long. No more. Let us return. The way to Babylon lies straight before us; and in three days' time we shall get there.

Nebuchadnezzar. In which three days, I may cast off this outside of a brute.

Second Babylonian. Yes, sovereign, and resemble what at all times you have shewn yourself, our royal master, and respectable liege king: the idol almost of a people's worship: but, at least, the object of their love.

Nebuchadnezzar. Their love, I will in future, study to repay. Bring, bring me therefore to them: the least stay is now injurious to me. I am overwhelmed beneath a mighty debt, and anxious to acquit myself of what I owe. Lead on, and I will follow you.

Third Babylonian. Before, or rather in the middle of our company, will we escort you. Let us therefore on.

Nebuchadnezzar. Oh unexpected day! oh heaven! oh heaven!

CCCXXXV. CCCXXXVI. CCCXXXVII.

2 KINGS xxv.

* THE DEMOLITION OF JERUSALEM, AND ZEDEKIAH'S EYES PUT OUT IN PRISON, WITH JEHOIACHIN'S DELIVERANCE.

BEFORE CHRIST 562.

SCENE. *A prison.*

JEHOIACHIN *and an Officer.*

JEHOIACHIN.

FULL seven and thirty years have I remained shut up in this dark prison-house ; nor am I yet familiarized thereto. Full seven and thirty years have I been banished from my native country, but not yet forgot it. What good tidings therefore, Officer, amid such grief as overwhelms my spirits, can you have to bring ?

* This demolition of Jerusalem, and Zedekiah's eyes put out, have been adverted too already : they are only more particularly mentioned to Jehoiachin in these three articles, that there might be some reason for producing him.

The Officer. Afflicted monarch ! Grief has for a length of time indeed weighed down your spirits ; but the period of that grief is happily now come. Indulge it then no longer ; for before the sun, that has so often set and risen upon your sorrow, shall have run another half hour's progress through the heavens, will our new monarch Evil-Merodach, transmit his signet hither to release you.

Jehoiachin. Is it possible ! No, no ; there cannot be such happiness in store for my enjoyment after such distress : and you do wrong to aggravate my sufferings, by endeavouring thus to give me hope, that in the end I may be disappointed.

The Officer. To do so is far from my intention ; though I wonder not at the idea you give way to. Yet have hope, Jehoiachin, and hope that will not in the end deceive you ; for the thing is so, and you will soon be free.

Jehoiachin. Oh heaven ! oh heaven ! Was there yet ever wretchedness like mine, for seven and thirty years in this dark dungeon ! Was there ever happiness like mine, when after such imprisonment, I am so soon to be set free !

The Officer. Of your approaching happiness conceive as you think proper ; but respecting your past wretchedness, consider, as you ought,
that

that numerous are the children of affliction in this world, and that full long we may employ our time, and yet not find out *him*, who can with truth complain, he is of all most miserable. Even he who was exalted to the throne, when you yourself so long ago, came hither, though a thousand times more wretched than you are, would not perhaps speak truth, if he should so complain.

Jehoiachin. Oh tell me, my good friend; for in this dungeon I have been immured from all society and commerce with my fellow-creatures, knowing nothing of the multiplied events that have ensued, no friend, not even in the land from which I was so violently Sundered. Tell me, I repeat, good friend, yea, tell me what has been transacted with regard to Judah since I lost it. You assure me I shall very quickly be set free. If I am worthy of so great a blessing, I may be, in that case, worthy to be told some few of the events that have transpired among my countrymen; since I have been buried from all knowledge of them.

The Officer. Yes, Jehoiachin, I will comply with your request; and after you have heard my tale of sorrow, you will doubtless think yourself less miserable, than till now you have supposed you were. Sit, then, while I relate strange matters.

Jehoiachin. I do sit, and am, as you may notice, all attention.

The Officer. Hear then while I tell the whole. Your uncle Mattaniah, being nominated by the conqueror of Jerusalem to fill your place, first having had his name, as usual, changed to that of Zedekiah, was but one and twenty years of age when that event took place.

Jehoiachin. Yes, yes, I know it very well.

The Officer. He was not long desirous of remaining upon terms of friendship with the king of Babylon; for scarcely had he reigned a year, when he rebelled against his master. Nebuchadnezzar, for a time, suppressed his indignation; but at length, when Zedekiah had been king ten years, or thereabouts, once more begirt Jerusalem with many of his forces, and at length subdued it.

Jehoiachin. There was then an end of that thrice favoured city, which the Lord had promised should exist for ever.

The Officer. Zedekiah, with the men of war, escaped; but in the plains of Jericho was overtaken by a part of the besiegers, who particularly anxious to secure the king, effected their desire, and with his sons conducted him to Riblah, where the king of Babylon was then encamped. The king of Babylon gave judgment

ment on him, when his sons were put to death, and he himself condemned to have his eyes put out, be carried thence to Babylon, and bound in chains of brass.

Jeboiachin. Alas, poor Zedekiah!

The Officer. Yes, indeed. His fate, condemned to lose his eye-sight, as he was, as well as to endure imprisonment, is much more lamentable than your fortune, who have hitherto had nothing to deplore, excepting sequestration from mankind. But I forget myself; and therefore, will return. In lieu of Zedekiah, Gedaliah was appointed to be sovereign of the remnant of the people spared: but hardly had the king of Babylon departed, than ten men, conducted by the son of Nethaniah, of the royal seed, revolted; and assailing Gedaliah, murdered him, which did but aggravate the misery of those he was appointed by the king of Babylon to govern. Things went on from bad to worse in Judah, till three months ago, when our late monarch dying, Evil-Merodach, the present king, succeeded to the empire; and as frequently it happens, that new masters introduce new laws, so Evil-Merodach's succession to the crown is the occasion of your joy. This is the whole I had to say; and soon may you

L 4

expect

expect his messenger will enter with the order for your liberation.

Jehoiachin. If this news be true, why should my bosom be thus agitated? The occasion is apparent. It denounces something I was far from thinking would have taken place, while to the horrors of imprisonment I was inured, and therefore to support it, was the less afflicting. Dear good friend, the place without, where I am every day permitted to walk forth, though it be close, is, notwithstanding, airier than this dungeon. Lead me thither, I am agitated, and want room to breathe. Do me this act of friendship; and perhaps I may be grateful, when restored, as you have promised me I shall be, to the world.

The Officer. Come, I will do as you desire. Lean on my arm.

Jehoiachin. O God of Israel! have I lived to be set free, or no?

CCCXXXVIII.

DANIEL V.

THE HAND-WRITING ON THE
WALL.

BEFORE CHRIST 538.

SCENE. *A banqueting room.** BELSHAZZAR *at a table feasting with the*
QUEEN and LORDS.

BELSHAZZAR.

LET mirth go round. This is our birth-day. Let us therefore pass it joyously. To-morrow will be time enough for thought and care.

* This Belshazzar was the son of Evil-Merodach, and Nebuchadnezzar's grandson: he established his dominion by removing certain traitors, who had put to death his father, and usurped the government of Babylon. In the first years of Belshazzar's reign, or five hundred and fifty-five before Christ, Daniel had the vision of the four beasts, importing the four monarchies, or empires of the world, and of the Almighty's giving over to the Son of Man all power and sovereignty.

Two years ensuing this transaction, the same prophet Daniel had the vision of the ram, and great he-goat; betokening the destruction of the Persian monarchy, and of the misery Antiochus would bring upon the Jewish tribes.

L 5

The

The Queen. Yes, friends : Spare not the banquet ; but be merry. Every thing invites you to be so. And let these vessels, that have lain so many years secluded from the day, perform their office, and go round.

Belshazzar. Our grandfather, when first his armies took Jerusalem, brought out the precious treasure from the building, dedicated, as the Jews informed him, to their God. I need not tell you he inclined, in some sort, to their superstition, and supposed them holy. Therefore were they kept laid up, as not to be profaned by any vulgar use : but in our thoughts, they have a better destination now, than when in former times the Jews displayed them in their temples. What think *you*, good friends ?

First Lord. Our thoughts are with your majesty's. The great Nebuchadnezzar is at length no more, and therefore let us speak concerning him with no less reverence than the dead demand : but, in my notions, he was far too superstitious, and too much attached to the religion of those people he had conquered, and brought captive hither.

The Queen. Their so boasted god could not preserve them from that servitude they were reduced to. Why then should their conqueror have evinced such reverence for him ?

Belshazzar.

Belshazzar. To that reverence very possibly was due his seven years' sequestration from mankind. His latter days were passed in sorrow; and scarce more than half a year did he survive his restoration to mankind. Let us be therefore wiser than he shewed himself, and not for such a hard task-master, lose so many pleasures of this world. Drink deep, then, for before we think of going hence, the sun, that does but now cast down his radiance from the zenith, shall have sunk beneath the western main. I take the goblet in my hand, and drink to the whole company about me. Let the trumpet publish it to those carousing in the rest of the apartments, and to every one without.—(*A flourish*).

All. Our duty to Belshazzar. Let him live for ever.—(*Another flourish*).

Belshazzar. For your loyalty much thanks; and may the gods of Babylon reward it.—But what means yon sight? (*Looking at the opposite wall*).

The Queen. What sight, my lord?

Belshazzar. What means that arm extended, as I see it, and that writing on the wall?

The Queen. What writing? I see nothing.

First Lord. Or I either.

Belshazzar. See no writing! What, would

you persuade me? Look! see, how the pen proceeds! For my part, I can see the words, and they are *Mene, Tekel, U—Uphar—Upharfin.*

The Queen. Wherefore talk thus idly, and pretend to see this writing? We, for our parts, can discover nothing.

First Lord. No.

Second Lord. Undoubtedly, my lord is indisposed.

Belshazzar. Is indisposed! What, see you not the writing on the wall before us? Well, this is most strange! But order hither the magicians.

The Queen. Are you serious?

Belshazzar. Yes, quite serious. Fetch me the magicians I repeat. But what can they interpret? Oh, my friends, this is the work of God, that God I mean, of whom we have so lately spoke contemptuously. Yea, verily, this is God's writing. See! Look now! The hand hath done its task, and is withdrawing. It means something. Let it be interpreted. But the magicians and Chaldeans in my court know nothing. Let me, therefore, have some man of wisdom, or Belshazzar never will know peace again.

The Queen. Can it be possible? And do you really behold this writing?

Belshazzar.

Belshazzar. Do I really behold it! What! When it appears before me, can I but behold it? Something it must mean; and therefore let it be interpreted, or never, for the time to come, shall I have peace of mind.

The Queen. Once more, can it be possible? Your knees, however, smite against each other; and, at least, you fancy you behold this writing. If it be so, let not your ideas trouble you; for there is one in Babylon, endowed with wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, and whom your father's father constituted master of the astrologers and soothsayers. Let him be sent for, therefore. You assent: Go then and bring him hither.—(*Two or three go out*).

Belshazzar. Well, you are obeyed; and what is now to follow?

The Queen. Every thing; since a superior spirit in the interpreting of dreams, explaining doubtful sentences, and solving difficulties, is discoverable in this Belteshazzar. Being therefore come, he will explain this writing.

Belshazzar. See, see, now the arm is disappearing!—Do you not at length perceive it?

First Lord. I perceive the wall, for my part; but besides it, nothing.

Second Lord. Nor yet I.

Third Lord. Nor any one, except your highness.

Belshazzar.

Belshazzar. No one, save myself! Why this is just as if one miracle were added to another! Is it possible, that what I see so plainly should——

The Queen. Methought, you said just now, the arm was disappearing; how then can you still perceive it, and so plainly?

Belshazzar. It is disappearing by degrees. It vanishes as I have seen a rainbow, and is now scarce visible. But see! the seer is coming. Ho! make room there, every one, and let him stand before us.—(*To Daniel coming in attended*). Belteshazzar, I have sent to fetch you: but before I mention the occasion of my message, first look round, and let me know if you see any thing miraculous.

Daniel (*with his eyes directed to that quarter where the writing is supposed to be*). I do. A hand that has been writing on the wall, but now scarce visible.

Belshazzar. There! now what will you say?

The Queen. Astonishing!

Belshazzar. But say, for the conviction of this presence, who pretend there is no writing, what you read there in such characters.

Daniel. Four words, as follows: *Mene, mene, Tekel and Upharsin.* Let not this invisibility, however, trouble or astonish the assembly? for the
the

hand is come from God : nor has he written these four words for any one here present to behold, O monarch, but yourself, and me that am his prophet.

Belshazzar. Yes, that it was come from God, I feared ; and sent to have your explanation of it. Let me hear it then ; and if I have displeased that God, whom taught by such a wonder I begin to stand in fear of, aid me to repent.

Daniel. Yes, monarch ; you have grievously displeased that God, who made you what you are, by such a prophanation of the vessels taken from his holy temple, as the employment of them in a noisy feast. And by this writing on the wall, he lets you know his anger waxes hot against you.

Belshazzar. I have sinned. Let me confess I have. Perchance, your God will think it something of a virtue in me, that remembering what my royal father has so often said concerning you, that wisdom, light, and understanding, fill your heart, I sent to fetch you hither. Read me then the writing, and interpret it ; so shall your clothing be of scarlet, you shall wear a chain of gold about your neck, and be the third in rank as well as power among my subjects.

Daniel.

Daniel. Be your gifts, O monarch, to yourself; and your reward some other person's. I will, notwithstanding, give you the interpretation you require. Know then, that of a certainty, the God of heaven and earth bestowed great majesty upon your grandfather, together with a kingdom, so that every people, tongue, and nation, feared him. Whom he would, he slew; and whom he would, he kept alive: but when his heart exulted in the pride of greatness, all his glory was with justice taken from him, and himself driven out into the forest, till adversity convinced him that the Almighty governs among men, and places over them whatever rulers he thinks fit: but you, Belsazzar, though his grandson, and not profiting by the unhappy fortunes of your father Evil-Merodach, whose cutting-off by murderers, you should certainly have construed as a punishment from the Almighty, have omitted to avail yourself of two such terrible examples, and waged war against the Lord, by setting forth the vessels of his house before you, drink-wine thereout, and paying homage to your gods of gold and silver, brass and iron, nay, even wood and stone, that have no understanding; while you gave not glory to the God from whom your life proceeds. This, therefore, is
his

his sentence on you. **MENE, MENE**—God hath ended your dominion; **TEKEL**—He hath weighed, and found you wanting; and **UPHARSIN**—Henceforth is your kingdom rent asunder, and bestowed upon the Medes and Persians.

First Lord. Let us rise. His highness is not well.

Belshazzar. Break up the assembly; and conduct me hence, good friends.

The Queen. Support him hence into the open air. Stand not on order, in withdrawing; but withdraw at once, as well as you are able.

Belshazzar. I submit. The God of Israel hath decreed whatever is to happen, and *He* only is the God that claims obedience.

CCCXXXIX. CCCXL. CCCXLI.

APOCRYPHA.

THE FRAUD OF BEL FOUND OUT;
THE DRAGON KILLED; AND DA-
NIEL THROWN INTO THE DEN
OF LIONS.

BEFORE CHRIST 538.

THE interpretation, put by Daniel on the writing, was not long delayed: the very night succeeding it, was king Belshazzar slain, and Babylon soon after seized on by that Cyrus, who is so much spoken of in history. Thus, therefore, was the empire of the Babylonians rendered subject to the Medes and Persians, as had often been predicted by the prophets; for by heirship, Cyrus not long afterward succeeded to the throne of Persia, and by virtue of his marriage contract, to the government of Media. Cyrus made the Mede Darius ruler of the kingdom he had vanquished, and immediately returned through Media into Persia.

Under Cyrus and Darius, Daniel was in no less estimation than before. "He was pro-
"moted," says the sacred writer, "above
"every

"every other person in the realm." This preference, however, did but get him enemies, who were continually plotting his destruction, and the way they went to work, as we have shewn already in the case of Shadrach, and his two companions, was by making his religion operate against him.

Now, the Babylonians had an idol they called Bel, and by the juggling of the priests, they were persuaded that this idol eat like human beings. This necessity of food was, in itself, a proof against the circumstance of its divinity; but no absurdity was in those times so great, but what idolaters could reconcile to their belief. Darius, though the friend of Daniel, was, however, one of those idolaters, and daily worshipped Bel, while Daniel worshipped God.

Here, therefore, was an opportunity for Daniel's enemies to labour his undoing. They availed themselves thereof, and by insinuations to the monarch, easily found means to prejudice him on the subject of his favourite's paying homage to another god, than that of so benevolent a king. Darius therefore, being wrought on in this manner, summoned Daniel to appear before him; asking: "Why he did not worship Bel." "Because

"Because I may not," answered Daniel, "bow my knee to idols made with hands, but only to the living God, whose power created heaven and earth, and governs all things."

Darius. Only to the living God! And think you Bel is not a living god, when constantly he eats and drinks at such a vast expence, since every night his priests provide him at my cost, twelve measures of fine flour, six vessels of pure wine, and forty sheep?

Daniel. Be not deceived, O king; for Bel is nothing but a lump of clay within, and brass without. How then can such an image eat and drink?

Darius. How can he? How can you put such a question? Rather ask his priests, and those that worship with them, if he does *not* eat and drink?

Daniel. Ah, prince, you are persuaded so; but every thing is imposition.

Darius. Imposition! Bel has seventy priests, that every day assemble in his worship, and do these impose upon me? Shall so many be called liars, that one man may, on the other hand, be true?

Daniel. It is the truth of God I speak; for with respect to this dumb idol, never did it take a bit or drop of those provisions which the priests pretend to set before it.

Darius.

Darius. Never?

Daniel. Never.

Darius. This unqualified assertion of the frauds committed every day by threescore and ten priests, should be immediately disproved, if they are holy, or confirmed to their confusion, if they lie. Go therefore you (*speaking to the people of his court*), and bid them instantly appear before me.

They were sent for, and appeared, when king Darius thus addressed them. "What am I informed of? You are taxed with fraud in the affair of Bel's provisions, who, I hear from Belteshazzar, cannot eat or drink. Disprove the charge then, or look to it well: for death shall be your portion: but if otherwise, your false accuser shall be punished with immediate death; for he hath spoken blasphemy against the holiness of Bel." With this condition Daniel acquiesced, and followed with the priests to settle matters at the idol's temple.

Being there, the priests, confiding in the consequences of an artifice they always had recourse to, that the king might be persuaded Bel did eat and drink the daily fare he paid for, they spoke boldly saying: "Lo, we quit the temple; but do you, O king, give order
" that

“ that the flour, the wine and sheep, as usual,
“ be prepared and set in the accustomed place
“ for Bel. Give order likewise, that the door,
“ for greater confirmation of the business, be
“ sealed up : and if, when we come in to-
“ morrow, it be found that Bel has not con-
“ sumed the whole, in that case we will suffer
“ death ; but if he have, then Belteshazzar,
“ for accusing us, shall die.”

“ Content,” said Daniel ; and no sooner were the priests withdrawn, than in the presence of the king, and no one else, he bade his servants bring fine dust, and strew it over the whole flooring of the temple. This was done, and when the flour, the meat and wine, were brought as usual, every one went out, Darius with his signet sealing up the door, that no deception might be practised.

In the morning rose Darius, and proceeded to the temple, having with him Daniel, who had passed the night without one anxious thought ; as knowing it impossible that any image could eat food ; and being certain the precaution he had taken would convince the king, that in the night-time some one must have entered to remove the portion set before his idol.

Upon coming to the temple door, Darius asked of Daniel, if the seals were whole ? To which

which he answered: "Yes, O king, they are." And when the door was opened by Darius's command, no sooner had he looked upon the table, and seen every thing was gone that had been placed thereon the night before, than he exclaimed as follows: "Great art thou, O Bel, and in thy doings there is no deceit at all!" But Daniel, with a smile, desired him to observe the flooring of the temple, saying, "What can these marks mean?" Darius saw them, and made answer: "I behold men's footsteps here!" It was by no means difficult to trace them; so that very quickly were those secret doors found out, through which the priests were used to take away the victuals that were left for Bel's consumption. In his anger, therefore, did the king destroy them, and delivered Bel into the power of Daniel, who demolished both the image and its temple.

Added to this idol, there was likewise an exceedingly great dragon, which the Babylonians worshipped. And Darius said to Daniel: "Will you have it, that this also is made up of clay and brass? Behold, he lives, and eats and drinks. You cannot say he is not living, and should therefore pay him adoration." "No," said Daniel, "I will worship none but God. Give me, however, leave,

“leave, O king, and I will slay this dragon without sword or staff.” The king permitted him to do whatever he thought proper, and the prophet thereupon took pitch, and grease, and hair, and seethed them all together, making balls thereof. These balls he put into the dragon’s mouth, which he had hardly swallowed, than he burst asunder: whereupon the prophet ridiculed the people that then happened to stand by him, saying: “These, O Babylonians, are the gods you worship!”

But this treatment of the dragon was no sooner known in Babylon, than all the people were affected with the greatest indignation, and conspired against the king, complaining he was quite become a Jew. These murmurs got to such a pitch, that to appease the malcontents, Darius was constrained to give up Daniel to the fury of his enemies, upon another charge soon afterward exhibited against him. He was cast into a lion’s den, and there remained six days, the lions all the while forbearing, though beforehand they had been denied their usual food, to hurt him.

In this interval, we cannot but suppose he wanted food himself, which God provided for him in this manner. In Judea lived a certain prophet, who had made a quantity of pottage for

for his reapers in the field, with which he was repairing to them: but an angel of the Lord descending, bade him carry it to Babylon. To this, the prophet answered, saying, he had never been at Babylon; on which the angel bore him through the air, and by the vehemency of his spirit, set him down before the den.

The prophet took the pottage sent him in this manner, and gave thanks to God, subsisting on it those six days he was confined; for on the seventh, Darius visited the den, that he might weep for Daniel's miserable fate.

CCCXLII. CCCXLIII.

DANIEL VI.

DANIEL LIBERATED FROM THE DEN OF LIONS, AND DARIUS'S DECREE.

BEFORE CHRIST 538.

SCENE. *A court yard belonging to the Palace.*

DARIUS.

HOW hard seems the condition royalty is doomed to! Scarce a twelvemonth is yet ended, when the God of Israel, as is univer-

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sally believed in Babylon, condemned Belshazzar to be slain for prophanation. He was put to death the very night this Belteshazzar, through the inspiration of his God, explained the sense of that hand-writing on the wall, which every one still talks of; and his realm devolved to Cyrus, who invested me with jurisdiction over it. Why, therefore, should these Babylonians have thus urged me to such harsh severity of conduct towards a prophet so esteemed, as every one must certainly acknowledge? How deplorable the inconstancy of human beings! Hardly was I fixed in my new state, when, owing to the public voice in his behalf, I made him the first ruler of those six score princes that were then appointed over the whole realm; and now, to cast him, as I did six days ago, into the den of lions? Why did I proceed so far? I was compelled thereto. The rulers of those six score princes, and those princes likewise, envied him for that promotion he was called to; and resolved to undermine him in his place, if possible: but "then," said they, for I have since discovered their whole plot, "we shall not find occasion to accuse him, if it be not in relation to the orders of his God." On this, so fertile in expedients was their malice, they assembled in
one

one place ; and, coming all into my presence, greeted me with their accustomed salutation. " King Darius," said they, " live for ever," and continued afterward as follows: " The three rulers of the realm, the princes, counsellors, and captains, have consulted with each other, to establish a decree, and make a royal statute, ordering, that if any man for thirty days to come shall offer up a prayer, except to you, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Establish, therefore, the decree, and sign the statute, that it be not changed, according to the law enacted by the Medes and Persians, that are never altered." What, in such case, could I do? I did not apprehend it levelled, as it proves ; and, therefore, signed the writing. Now, it seems, that Belteshazzar, when he knew what I had done against him, went up to his house, and having previously thrown open all his windows looking towards Jerusalem, knelt down, as was his custom, three times daily, and both prayed to, and gave thanks before his God. This praying to and giving thanks was what his rivals wanted ; who approaching, asked me : if I had not made a statute to such purpose. And not seeing yet their drift, I answered, I *had* done so. Whereupon, discovering their

whole purpose, they continued saying: "Who
 " would have believed it, but that Belte-
 " shazzar, you have so exalted, heedeth
 " neither you, O king, nor yet the law you
 " have enacted; but, as usual, three times
 " daily offers up his prayer to God." On this,
 I could not but discern their complot, and
 was sore displeased, devising how I might con-
 trive to free him from the danger: but, aware of
 my intention, they drew nearer, saying: "Re-
 " collect, Darius, that no law established by
 " the Medes and Persians can be changed."
 This was unanswerable on my part; and there-
 fore, of constraint, I ordered they should bring
 him without loss of time before me. They
 delayed not to obey my stern commandment,
 and the prophet six days since was thrown into
 this den of lions here beside me. Having thrust
 him in, they brought a stone, and placed it
 close before the mouth, first having sealed it
 with my seal, and with the seal too of my
 lords; since which I have consumed the time
 in tears, and fasting; neither have I listened,
 as before, to any instruments of music. Thus
 have all my nights and days been past, and with
 the seventh returning sun rise, am I too returned.
 This is the den of lions. Has his God been able
 to preserve him from their fury? I hear no one
 found.

found. The den, as far as I can yet distinguish, is one scene of silence. But what hope is there in that? They may have torn their miserable prey to pieces, and be slumbering on the horrid meal. Yes, yes, it must be so; for were the prophet living, I should hear him. He is dead, no doubt, for could his God have saved him, he would not in such a grievous situation be quite silent? God, if I may credit what the Babylonians tell me they have witnessed, may indeed have stopped the lions' mouths; but then, respecting food? Could he have given him that? Oh, no. And for six days to fast must have exhausted any human creature, though the lions had been kept from falling on him. He must therefore unavoidably be dead.—And yet—Ah! let me cease conjecturing, and convince myself by looking through the grated door-ways. I am anxious to be certain of his destiny, but dare not for my life draw nearer, since a moment would make known the worst.—Oh Belteshazzar! Belteshazzar!

Daniel (from within the den). I am here, my lord.

Darius. What was that voice? Not Belteshazzar's?

Daniel. Yes, O king, the voice is mine, as you may now distinguish, and no other's.

Darius. Am I perfectly awake? Am I so happy? Am I—but speak, servant of the living God, yet once again, and tell me if his power has, in reality, preserved you from the lions.

Daniel. It has done so; for you hear, O king, I can inform you I am living. Live you too for ever.—The Almighty has dispatched his angel, and shut up the lions' mouths, who would have otherwise devoured me. Yea too, he has likewise sent me food.

Darius. Shut up the lions' mouths, and sent you food! Oh what a God, that could do this!

Daniel. Not only could he do thus much; but he has done it, since my innocence was manifested in his sight; and you too, monarch, might have seen it, had you been as willing to do justice as my enemies have shewn themselves desirous to destroy me.

Darius. Hard, but yet just accusation! I will haste, however, and command your liberation; and those enemies that leagued against you shall be put into your place.

Daniel. No, no; I wish not for such vengeance.

Darius. You are far too liberal: they would have sought your life: what therefore can be juster than that they, together with their wives and

and children, should be thrown into the den. I will not do less justice than this comes to. They shall every one be doomed this instant to it, and the God that has preserved you for your righteousness, by shutting up the creatures' mouths, will open them against *their* wickedness; and every limb, even if they had a thousand, will they tear in pieces, e'er they reach the bottom of the den.

Daniel. I have stood silent to remark how far your undiscerning wish for justice would extend. But make not me the object of such vengeance. God requires it not. How then shall I consent thereto?

Darius. Of that hereafter: my first care must turn on your enlargement, after which, I will send greeting to all people, languages, and nations, my decree, that men in future tremble, and bow down before the God you worship; for he only is the living God, and his dominion such as never shall have end.

Daniel. That, that, O king, will be the part of real piety: but go, and let me quit this place as soon as possible.

Darius. Yes, I will fly to save you.

CCCXLIV.

DANIEL ix.

THE JEWS' CAPTIVITY CON-
CLUDED.

BEFORE CHRIST 537.

DARIUS having reigned a year in Babylon, which place the Jews were brought to by the armies of that monarch, who had formerly besieged and took Jerusalem, about this time began the seventieth year of their captivity, which Jeremiah, in his nine and twentieth chapter, prophesied would be the last of their calamity. Accordingly, the prophet Daniel, in consideration of the time so near at hand, poured out his fervent prayer to God for the remission of those sins, which he himself, together with his brethren, had committed : Gabriel, the archangel, brought him a reply from heaven, not only with respect to this already mentioned termination of the Jewish state of servitude, but also in allusion to the spiritual deliverance of the church by the Messiah's death for every sin committed by mankind ; and ended by promulgating that memorable
prophecy

prophecy of what are called the **SEVENTY WEEKS**: for which, the reader is referred to Daniel's ninth and following chapter.

CCCXLV.

EZRA i. ii. iii.

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS FROM THEIR CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON.

* BEFORE CHRIST 536.

CYRUS, son of that Cambyfes who was king of Persia, having now, by heirship, got possession of his father's throne, and being likewise in the throne of Media, by his marriage contract, was acknowledged king of all the Eastern world; and with him, what is called the Persian empire first began. It flourished and continued for two hundred years and something more. At the commencement of it, was that famous edict published, which is mentioned in the first of Ezra, to the following purport:

“ Thus saith Cyrus, monarch of the eastern world. The God of heaven hath graciously

M 5

“ bestowed

* Here begins the Persian empire.

“ bestowed upon me all the kingdoms of the
“ earth, and ordered I should build him at Je-
“ rusalem a place of worship. Who then of
“ his people are there in my kingdom? May
“ their God be with them; and let such, when
“ they have read this edict, go up quickly to
“ Jerusalem and Judah with our licence, to
“ rebuild his temple. Let my subjects also
“ help them, every one, with silver and with
“ gold, with goods, with beasts, and with a
“ free will offering to complete the work.”

This was the letter of king Cyrus; and in further proof of his benevolence or friendship, he returned the Jewish people all the vessels appertaining to God's house, which seventy years before that period had been brought away. The Jewish people, therefore, now set out on their return into the land of Israel, to the amount of two and forty thousand men and upward. Two years after this, they set about the business of rebuilding; neither was it long before the first foundations of the house were laid: the old men weeping, who but three and fifty years ago had seen the former temple not entirely ruined; and the young rejoicing, who beheld the new one rising in its stead.

CCCXLVI.

EZRA iv.

THE FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE
TEMPLE HINDERED.

BEFORE CHRIST 534.

THE people of Samaria having heard of this intention to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, sent workmen to assist the builders : but these last, for reasons which we are not made acquainted with, refused to be indebted to their aid ; in pique of which contempt, we find that the Samaritans, by false suggestions during the whole reign of Cyrus, greatly hindered and perplexed the Jews, although they could not totally prevail on Cyrus to forbid the prosecution of their work. However, after Cyrus's decease they had more influence, it appears, with Artaxerxes, otherwise Cambyfes, who came after Cyrus. Upwards of six years had now elapsed, since the conclusion of the Jews' captivity, when the Samaritans drew up a letter couched as follows, which they sent king Artaxerxes :

“ Be it known to you, O monarch, that the
“ Jews who have returned from Babylon into
M 6 “ Judea,

“ Judea, are rebuilding the rebellious city of
 “ Jerusalem, which if they finish, they will
 “ neither pay toll, tribute, tax, nor custom,
 “ and your revenue will therefore be endan-
 “ gered. Now, O king, since we exist, and
 “ have our maintenance by your immediate
 “ bounty, and it was not meet we should un-
 “ moved be witnesses of your dishonour, we
 “ have sent this information, that the records
 “ of your ancestors may be consulted, which
 “ will shew you that Jerusalem is a rebellious
 “ city, and hath often been the great fomenter
 “ of sedition; on account of which, it was
 “ destroyed: if therefore you permit it to be
 “ built again, you will, in that case, have no
 “ further portion on this side the river.” Such
 was the epistle; and it took effect, according
 to the wish of those who framed it; since king
 Artaxerxes gave command that the rebuilding
 of the Temple should be put a stop to. The
 injunction was complied with; and for two
 years afterward the work stood still.

CCCXLVII.

EZRA v. vi. and ESTHER i. ii.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE
REASSUMED.

BEFORE CHRIST 520.

IN the second year of king Darius, called Hystaspes, otherwise Ahasuerus, who succeeded Artaxerxes, did the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, by their prophecies, encourage Jeshua, their high priest, and Zerubbabel their chief captain, to renew the building of the Temple, being countenanced to do so by Ahasuerus. Haggai, particularly, in the second chapter of the book that bears his name, assures them that the glory of this second Temple shall exceed the glory of the former; not as being a more beauteous structure, but because the Son of God, the blessed Saviour of mankind, who was to spring from Abraham's loins, should honour it in future with his presence, and from thence proclaim the reign of peace to all mankind. Ahasuerus, being told of the proceeding of the Jews, approved it, as already we have intimated (notwithstanding he was earnestly

earnestly solicited to countermand their work), and four years afterwards the building was complete; Ahasuerus, in the interval, as mentioned in the first and second chapter of the book of Esther, having put away his wife, a heathen woman,* and took Esther, of the Jewish nation, who had wrought upon him to befriend her countrymen.

* The cause of this proceeding was as follows. In the first of Esther, it appears that king Ahasuerus having made a royal feast, sent messengers to fetch queen Vashti, with the crown upon her head, that he might shew her to the princes of the land and people: but she would not pay obedience to the summons, having made a feast herself for certain women. This contempt enraged Ahasuerus, who referred the matter to be judged by those they called wise men about him. Their advice was this: that Vashti should be put away; as other wives, by her example, might despise their husbands. The advice was followed; and Ahasuerus issued forth a letter on the occasion, purporting that every where, the men should govern in their families.

CCCXLVIII. CCCXLIX. CCCL.

ESTHER iii. iv.

HAMAN'S PRIDE, HIS CRUELTY, AND MORDECAI'S SUIT TO ESTHER.

BEFORE CHRIST 510.

HAMAN.

IS it for this Ahasuerus has exalted me above the princes in his court, that Mordecai should despise me thus? His insolence must be repressed, before it rise too high; or, very possibly, elated as he is, because the king has lifted up his niece to set beside him on the throne, he may in time attempt much greater matters. Nay, in such high favour he appears to be, by virtue of this marriage, that I know not whether common prudence should not bid me fear the worst than can befall me. I abhor him; he hath openly refused to bow before me in the gate, although the princes he consorts with, pay me honour. I abhor too all his countrymen; they were inveterate enemies to the Amalekites, my ancestors, and sought to root them out: I will not, therefore, be content with any mean revenge.

revenge. The people, as they call themselves, of God, shall perish in one wreck, and that way satisfy my great resentment. Daily, since Ahasuerus was appointed to the throne, and first shewed favour to their tribes, for twelve years past, have I been plotting the affair, and frequently of late, together with my countrymen, been casting lots from day to day, from month to month, succeeding one another, to the twelfth, or Adar, which appears, from the decision to be *that*, the gods have set apart for their destruction. This is Adar; and accordingly, have I already filled the royal ear with intimation of the dangers that must flow from cherishing these Jews, and pointed out the wisdom of their being totally cut off in every part of his dominions. "King Ahasuerus," have I frequently reiterated, "live for ever! These
"incroachers on the right of every monarch
"round about them, are diffused through-
"out your kingdom, and their laws are dif-
"ferent far from those of any other people;
"neither keep they your's, although your
"power protects them. How then can it be
"for your advantage to endure them? If your
"servant's zeal, who trembles for his sove-
"reign's safety, be not out of season, let an
"order be sent forth for their destruction
"through

“ through the realm ; and out of joy that their
 “ liege king will in the sequel be secure from
 “ treasons, will a few good subjects, with my-
 “ self, deposit twice five thousand talents in
 “ the public treasury.” This constantly has
 been my theme ; and now, while I am speak-
 ing, I expect the king will speedily come hi-
 ther, and confirm my expectations. Yea, even
 now I see him coming ; and, unless my
 thoughts deceive me, I shall see, before the
 month be past, an universal massacre take place
 of so detestable a people in each quarter of the
 city, not excepting from the list this haughty
 queen and Mordecai. But no more : the king
 is coming.

Ahasuerus (coming in). Haman, I have
 weighed those reasons which your loyalty has
 urged against the Jews, established in my realm,
 and find, on search into the records of our
 country, that of old they have fomented feuds,
 wherever they sojourned. What follows there-
 fore, but that orders should be sent throughout
 the kingdom for their extirpation ?

Haman. Yes, my lord. All Jews, without
 exception, young and old, grown men and wo-
 men, with their little children, the whole mul-
 titude, wherever they reside, should perish, and
 in one day likewise, on the thirteenth day of
 this twelfth month, called Adar.

Ahasuerus.

Ahasuerus. To evince how forcibly your reasons operate, I have, already, sent out orders to the different provinces, that on the very day you think so proper for this business, it should be begun and finished.—The whole carnage in one day.

Haman. Ah now my lord, in thus providing for your safety, justly may we say you love your subjects.

Ahasuerus. If a single Jew survive upon the evening of that day, it is because our orders have not been complied with. They extend to all, except indeed, queen Esther, and her uncle Mordecai. Surely these two lives may be exempted, when the sword is executing its destructive purpose.

Haman. Doubtless may they, my good lord. Live you, O king, for ever; and for ever too live those, who claim your favour.

Ahasuerus. Ah here comes the queen! I will not meet her, lest she seek to turn away my purpose; for no doubt, but she has heard what order is gone forth, and means to plead in favour of her countrymen; which to prevent, I will withdraw myself, and shun her. Take, good Haman, in the interim, take my ring, by way of voucher for performing every thing, on this occasion, you yourself think proper. *(He goes out).*

Haman

Haman (following him). All my hopes are on the point of being gratified. The massacre is nearly now on foot; and when the nation of these Jews are once cut off, it will be then much easier to remove this Esther and her uncle. They must fall; but more particularly so the last, or all my expectations will be disappointed. She is here.—

Esther (coming in). What means all this! Sure, every one affects to shun me! Nay, why too, does my good uncle walk about the city, clothed in sackcloth, and ejaculating every now and then a loud and bitter cry! I have sent Hatach to enquire the reason, and supply him with fit raiment: but will that remove the cause of his affliction; for no common grief can he be now lamenting? Nothing less, one would imagine, than the downfall of God's people all at once: Or, would the joy he must experience from the royal favour be thus overcast?—The downfall of God's people all at once! Can such a great calamity be possible? But here comes Hatach; and whatever be the melancholy tidings, I shall hear the whole.—
(*To Hatach entering*). Well Hatach! What says Mordecai?

Hatach. Royal lady! I have nothing but disastrous news to give you. Mordecai bids
me

me tell you that Ahasuerus, at the instance of lord Haman, hath put forth a proclamation, or will do so very shortly, for the massacre of every Jew within the realm.

Esther. Oh my foreboding soul! A massacre, and at the instance (did you say) of Haman?

Hatach. Yes, of Haman, my liege queen. He has, it seems, made promise of a sum of money to procure this work of slaughter. But your uncle charges you, on the affection which you owe God's people, to go in and supplicate Ahasuerus, that this horrid proclamation may be countermanded.

Esther. Is this truth? Deceive me not, good Hatach, I beseech you.

Hatach. Trust me, the whole tale is but too true.

Esther. So unexpected, so severe, a persecution of our people! And what now can I perform to turn aside the blow? But where is Mordecai?

Hatach. Just before the palace gate.

Esther. Return, good Hatach, and inform him, that whoever, be he man or woman, comes into the inner court, unless the king require his presence, will assuredly be put to death. But, if indeed the king should hold him forth the golden sceptre, *that* alone can
save

save his life. For my part, I have not been sent for by the king these thirty days. Tell Mordecai this, and he will see I cannot supplicate Ahasuerus. Run, and let him know all this.

Hatach. I go, and will return with all the speed I can.

Esther (after *Hatach* is gone out). He has not much to say, and therefore will be back the sooner, to relieve my great anxiety! Alas! why did my uncle put on sackcloth in this manner? In his ordinary dress, he might have mourned; at least, till he had seen me. His improvidence would have been fatal to me, if this *Hatach*, the king's chamberlain, were not my friend, though at the hazard of his life. But he has made good haste; for I behold him coming back.—(To *Hatach* re-entering). Well, *Hatach*, have you seen my uncle, and received his answer; having been this little while away?

Hatach. My zeal to be of service, and my friendship, has increased my haste in coming back.

Esther. Thanks, dear good *Hatach*! Possibly, the day will come, when I may recompence such zeal and friendship, as I ought: but what says Mordecai?

Hatach.

Hatach. His reply was this : that if you fear *that* death which may ensue on your appearance in the presence when unbid, and by forbearing to entreat the king in favour of your people, hope you will be safe yourself, you are deceived ; for though you are an inmate of the palace, let your brethren be once massacred, and it will then be easy to destroy *you* likewise.

Esther. They will not be massacred, I trust !

Hatach. So too said Mordecai : but supposing they should get deliverance from another quarter, what then will God's people think of your proceeding ? In their rage, they will destroy your father's house, alledging you got footing in the palace merely to destroy your brethren ; for what else would even reasonable men, men not incensed by any previous wrong, infer from a refusal to entreat Ahasuerus for your brethren.

Esther. I confess they would be in the right ; and therefore, I forget all thoughts of my own safety. Go then, once again, good Hatach, and bid Mordecai gather all the Jews in Shushan, and its neighbourhood. Let them fast for me, as I also, and my maidens, will do ; in which state, I will appear before the king, although by law forbidden. If I perish, may God's will be done. I would say more,
but

but time will not allow me. Go then, my good friend, to Mordecai, and I too will go and frame myself for this sad business.

CCCLI. CCCLII. CCCLIII.

ESTHER V. vi. vii.

ESTHER'S INVITATION OF AHASUERUS TO A FEAST. THE GALLOWS MADE BY HAMAN FOR HER UNCLE: AND HIMSELF SOON AFTER HANGED THEREON.

SCENE. *An apartment in the Palace.*

HAMAN and ZERESH.

HAMAN.

THINK not so, dear wife; since every thing, as yet, goes well: yea, every thing as I could wish; for mark the progress of the event. The queen, no doubt, instructed by her uncle, unexpectedly put on the royal robes, and took her station in the inner palace, where Ahasuerus being then upon his throne, and giving audience, saw her. Yes, he saw her, and held out the golden sceptre, as the custom is;

is ; which, she observing, instantly drew nigh, and touched it. “ Esther,” said the king, “ What would you? Tell me your request, “ which shall be granted, were it half the “ kingdom.” Judge, if meditating so much mischief in my heart against this Esther, I had not some cause to fear, when I heard this !

Zerefb. No doubt, you had.

Haman. But in an instant afterwards, were all my fears dispersed, when Esther answered in this manner : “ Let the king and Haman “ come this day, and share in the refreshments “ of a humble feast ; for which my servants “ are at present making preparation.”

Zerefb. And to this, the king consented?

Haman. He did so ; and I went with him. This was yesterday. The banquet was served up, and while the wine was going round among us, once more did the king renew his question : “ What is your petition, Esther? “ Tell it,” said Ahasuerus, “ and you shall “ not meet with a denial, should you even ask “ for half my kingdom.”

Zerefb. You began to have your fears again, at the renewal of this question?

Haman. No ; and the reply of Esther was sufficient intimation, that my confidence was not ill-grounded. “ If,” said Esther to the king,

king, " I have found favour in your sight, and
 " it shall please you to vouchsafe my prayer,
 " once more do you and my lord Haman ho-
 " nour me upon the morrow with your pre-
 " fence at another banquet ; and my suit shall
 " be made known."

Zeresh. Upon the morrow !

Haman. Which is now arrived ; and hither
 I am come accordingly, to be a guest at this
 said banquet, that will quickly be served up.
 How foolish therefore have been all your fears,
 on my account ; for be assured, that Esther,
 taking note in what high estimation I am held,
 is wise enough to dread me ; and that therefore
 I am thus invited. What then hinders, but
 that instantly I should begin the work of my
 revenge, or be at least prepared to do so, when
 the occasion serves. Soon will this massacre
 begin. Go therefore you, dear wife, and bid
 the carpenter set up a gallows fifty cubits high.

Zeresh. For Mordecai ?—Right.—It shall be
 done ; and more than that, within the court
 yard of our dwelling, that your triumph over
 this aspiring rival may appear the greater. In
 the interval, dear husband, be you merry, and
 avail yourself of all the authority and influence
 you can possibly lay claim to with Ahasuerus,
 that this Mordecai may be hanged thereon.

Haman. Well counselled! I will set about it; and behold the king is drawing near. Away, and see that every thing be done as I have said. (*After Zereſh is gone out*). He ſeems quite taken up with thought. What can he muſe upon? No matter. I will wait till he obſerves me.

Abaſuerus (coming in, and talking to himſelf). This is ſet apart to be a day of feaſting. Let it alſo be a day of recompence to ſuch as have the plea of merit: among whom ſhould Mordecai certainly be counted; for the records of the Chronicles make mention, that when Bigthana and Tereſh, keepers of the palace-door, were plotting to lay hands upon me, he found out their treaſons, and preſerved me. Not long after, I addreſſed the people who were then about me, ſure of being told what recompence for ſuch great ſervice had been made him.—Yes, I turned me to the people, ſaying: “What reward hath Mordecai had for ſo much loyalty?” But they replied: “He hath received no recompence as yet.”—Let then the recompence this day be made him; and in right good time for ſuch a purpoſe. Here is Haman.—Haman, ſtand not at ſuch diſtance, but draw near. The banquet is by this ſerved up: let me, however, ſeize the opportunity I have at preſent, of enquiring what great
pleaſure

pleasure shall be done that subject whom the king delights to honour?

Haman (aside). This refers to me; for whom does he delight to honour more? (*To Abasuerus*). For him, dread sovereign, you delight to honour, let the royal raiment be brought forth, together with the horse you ride on, and the crown you wear. Let them be put into the hands of one among the noblest of the princes in the realm, that with the robe and crown he may invest the subject who has gained such honour, yea, and while he mounts, hold out the stirrup; after which, let him precede that subject in procession through the streets of Shushan, and proclaim: "Thus is it done for him the king delights to honour!"

Abasuerus. Nobly recommended! Therefore, after rising from the banquet now preparing for our entertainment, haste and take the royal raiment, with the crown and horse, as you have said, and,—Ha! the feast is ready.—(*The scene, drawing, discovers a table prepared, and Esther sitting at it*). And our queen sits waiting for us.

Haman (aside, while Abasuerus talks to Esther). He was interrupted; or the words to follow would have been—"and so let it be done to Haman."—I increase in honour every hour!

N 2

I grow

I grow in greatness! and my rival's fate is certain!——

Ahasuerus. Even so; approach then Haman. Sit. And now, queen Esther, that my heart may have no burthen on it, while we banquet; say beforehand what your suit is. Only make it known, and though it comprehend no less than half my kingdom, it shall be performed.

Esther. Yes, twice have you assured me to this purpose; therefore, thus encouraged, I will speak; for how can I sit down to banquet with a heart of sorrow? Once indeed have I put violence upon myself, and counterfeited gladness; but at present, when fresh reasons for affliction have within this half hour past been added to the former, can I any longer keep my sorrow secret?—No, Ahasuerus, I must finally give vent to what is labouring in my heart for utterance, or my heart will break in pieces.

Haman (aside). What means Esther?

Ahasuerus. I am listening; but, as yet, you have said nothing; or at most, informed me only what great need you have to offer some petition, but not said what that petition is. Proceed.

Esther. O king! If I have really found favour in your sight; and if it please you, let my life be granted at the prayer I make, and that
of

of my unhappy countrymen at the request I offer up ; for we are sold to be destroyed, assassinated, murdered. Had we only been condemned to bondage, I would then have held my tongue. I would have said: " It is my
" lord the king's good pleasure, that my nation
" should be brought to such calamity, and let
" a subject be submissive to the hand that has
" exalted her : " but if destruction will be quickly going forth, unbid by him, upon whose breath alone depends the life and death of every one in Shushan, is it any violation of my loyalty or gratitude if I complain?

Ahasuerus. What mean you, Esther?

Esther. For my countrymen I speak. I love them ; but not only are my countrymen the objects of that prayer I make ; for Mordecai, one among them, is my uncle ; and not only *that*, but he has proved himself a father to me, and as such, when I consider his affection, I must always own him. How then can I figure to myself the melancholy moment, which, perhaps, before the time of sun set will arrive, when I shall see that countryman of mine, that uncle, and that father too, a breathless corpse.

Ahasuerus. Before, if I divined not what you meant, I am much more to seek at present your intention. See that countryman of yours,

that uncle, and that father too, a breathless corpse! Does then my favour lead to such a fate? and is it likely, that the man whom I have lifted to so high a pitch of honour, that even Haman, after he is risen from the present banquet, is to have conducted in the royal raiment, and on horseback through the streets of Shushan (*Haman hearing this appears confounded*) by the noblest of our princes, who proceeding shall proclaim: "Thus is it done for him the king delights to honour."—Is it likely, I repeat, that Mordecai, being set apart for such distinction, should instead thereof become a breathless body?

Esther. Has my ear deceived me? Surely has it; for the king could never speak of Mordecai in this manner.

Abasuerus. Whom then should I speak of? Haman can bear witness for me. Ask him, if the thing be so; or rather speak you, Haman.

Haman (aside). How are all my expectations clouded over of a sudden! and the transports of my heart converted into terror! How egregiously have I mistaken!

Abasuerus. Well?—What ails you, Haman? Why not speak?

Haman (with a faltering voice). The king is truth itself.

Esther.

Esther. Then, how much likelier are we, to hear bad reports than good ones? Oh, my lord! I have learned nothing of this princely favour meant my uncle: but the tidings of a gallows, now erecting for him, have already reached me.

Ahasuerus. Of a gallows!

Esther. Of a gallows, my good lord. Yea, and the information is too true, as one at least here present can bear witness. Yes, my lord, this gallows is now putting up, I say. It has been seen; and Mordecai, whom the sunshine of your favour would thus cherish, is perhaps before the hour of sunset to be hanged upon a tree.

Ahasuerus. A gallows, and for Mordecai! for the man I love to honour? Who has dared put up this gallows? Let me know.

Esther. The man who durst do so is Haman.

Ahasuerus. Haman!

Esther. Yes; the enemy and adversary is this wicked Haman.

Ahasuerus. Haman!

Esther. In the court yard of his dwelling, is this gallows fixing; so deliberate is his malice!

Ahasuerus. Haman! Let me dwell for ever on the question! What! a gallows, and for Mordecai! I pronounce the crime impossible. And yet, if it be so, why speaks not Haman?

He is silent. He is all confusion, and the charge is true. Abominable villain!—Would you kneel?—Approach not; speak not; stay not in my presence. I am struck with horror! I want air to breathe in! Execrable Haman! (*He goes out*).

Haman. I am guilty. I am sentenced. I deserve the death just ready to befall me. What have I to offer? My ambition is my crime. What shall I say?—If you, however, could have pity.

Esther. I. You cannot sue to me. The spirit of an uncle must suggest my answer; and——

Haman. Alas, it is too true, that I have hated Mordecai, and much more than *that*; but oh! incomparable queen, as my offences are enormous (*falling on his knees before the queen*), let your pity be abundant. Raise me from the ground (*holding out his hands in supplication*).

Ahasuerus (returning). My rage increases!—What?—And will he force the queen before me?—Ho! without! (*To Harbonah, and others, coming in*). Go, drag this criminal with ignominy to his house. Within the court yard of it, you will find a gallows fixing. Wait till it be finished, and then hang him on it. Let his
face

face be covered, and no mercy shewn him. Hence!—I will not hear a word. Take him away. Come Esther.

CCCLIV.

ESTHER viii. ix.

THE MASSACRE OF THE JEWS REVERSED.

BEFORE CHRIST 509.

HAMAN being dead, on whose suggestion, and by whose advice, a general murder of the Jewish people would have been proceeded to, Ahasuerus was so far induced, by Esther's supplication, as to issue counter-orders, and permit the Jews' pursuing proper measures for defence, if they should be attacked: They were so in some parts; but being aided by the rulers of the princes, the lieutenants, deputies, and officers, who stood in fear of Mordecai (for since Haman's execution, he was more advanced in-favour than before it), smote their enemies; among which number, were ten sons, all born to Haman, who were afterwards, from detestation of their father's cruelty, hanged up in

N. 5

Shushan.

Shufhan. Thus was the intended massacre prevented; in commemoration of which signal mercy at the hand of God, two days, called days of Purim, were appointed to be kept for ever holy.”*

* The sequel of Esther's history is concluded in the Apocrypha, which see. That part not being what is called canonical, and having nothing of an interesting nature, we shall pass it over.

CCCLV. CCCLVI.

EZRA vii. and NEHEMIAH ii.

EZRA APPOINTED TO SETTLE THE
JEWISH COMMONWEALTH, AND
NEHEMIAH CONSTITUTED RU-
LER OF JUDEA.

FORTY years and more had passed away since Haman's execution, and the consequent delivery of the Jews from slaughter, when another Artaxerxes being on the throne of Persia, Ezra, who, as scripture tells us, was a ready scribe, or perfectly acquainted with the law of Moses, went from Babylon, in consequence of Artaxerxes' order to Jerusalem, four hundred and sixty-seven years before Christ,
that

that he might settle there the Jewish commonwealth, and make a perfect reformation in the church. This reformation is related in the seventh and following chapters of the book of Ezra to the end.

The prophet Nehemiah, twelve years after Ezra's leaving Babylon, or four hundred and fifty-five before Christ, was, by his master Artaxerxes, whom he served in quality of page, dispatched with letters, and a like commission to Jerusalem; for notwithstanding Ezra's care and conduct in establishing Judea, things were miserably situated in that province. Artaxerxes, therefore, being told of Nehemiah's sorrow for his country's situation, sent him to restore its government; in which great labour he succeeded to a wonder, as is mentioned in the former chapters of the book that bears his name.

Twelve years was Nehemiah in his government; which period being ended, he returned to Artaxerxes, who himself had reigned in Persia two and thirty years..

From this return of Nehemiah till the times of Alexander, called *the Great*, which comprehends one hundred years and something more,, but very little matter of a kind to be recorded:

here is mentioned in the sacred books. This space of time takes in whatever is related by the prophets down from Nehemiah, to the last, called Malachi, who, though his book is placed so far from Nehemiah, was contemporary with him, as is manifest from this consideration: namely, that he does not call upon the people to rebuild God's Temple, as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah did: but Malachi (the Temple being in his time rebuilt), reproves those great disorders, which, the prophet Nehemiah, in his thirteenth chapter, tells us, on his coming back a second time from Babylon, with fuller powers from Artaxerxes, he discovered had crept in among the people. And because, in future, a continued line of prophets was not, as before, to be expected, he exhorts the people to observe the law of Moses with unshaken steadfastness, till Christ the great chief prophet should appear among them, after his forerunner, John the Baptist, had begun his ministry, who was to come, as is particularly mentioned, "in the power and spirit of Elias, to incline the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of good men."

CCCLVII.

* THE CRUELITIES OF ANTIOCHUS.

BEFORE CHRIST 167.

ANTIOCHUS, by public edict, ordered every nation under his dominion to observe one sort of worship, and renouncing their peculiar customs, make profession of the same religion

* From the creation, to the time when Nehemiah left Jerusalem, as mentioned in the Article preceeding, do the sacred writings of the Hebrew people comprehend the annals of the times: but no one circumstance that happened afterward, till just before the appearance of the Saviour, can be otherwise obtained than out of the Apocrypha, and more particularly so the Macchabees, as also from the writings of Josephus, who has left us, in his works, a general history relating to the Jews, from Malachi, four hundred years before the birth of our Redeemer, to the time when Rome was at its height of glory. In this work we shall not prosecute the narrative of what the Macchabees, together with Josephus say; but that the story of God's people may not finally be incomplete, refer them to the index which is printed at the end of every large edition of the Bible; of all which, we shall detail no circumstance except the Article to which this note refers, and that too, on account of its pathetic subject; for which reason only, the affecting narrative of Tobit and the Widow Judith (both in the Apocrypha), had place.

¶ About the time of that Antiochus here mentioned, did the king of Macedon, whose name was Perseus, think of making war upon the Romans, and was conquered by them: So that with

religion as the Grecians did; the punishment of death with torture being menaced to the disobedient. Of the Jews, great numbers rather chose to suffer the severest tortures, than do sacrifice to idols; all which martyrdoms are very largely spoken of in various passages of those two books in the Apocrypha, both called the *Macchabees*. It is impossible to introduce them all within the compass of this work. We shall on that account suppress the greater number, and here introduce but one, as being much more interesting than the rest.

This martyrdom is what we meet with in the seventh chapter of the second of the *Macchabees*, respecting an unhappy mother, who, together with her seven devoted children, were commanded by Antiochus to give up Judaism, and in proof thereof, eat swine's flesh. How they paid obedience to the tyrant's orders, will be obvious from the sequel.

She had previously been brought, by order of Antiochus, together with her children, to the spot where, either they were publicly to eat

with that conquest, ended what may properly be called the Macedonian empire. *Properly* we say; because the relics of it, while the Roman power was rising, still survived, although imperfectly, and were continued in the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Syrian kings.

the

the interdicted meat, or answer with their lives for the contempt. Their resolution was not to be shaken, and already had the greater part of this heroic family endured the tyrant's malice. At this awful moment, was the woman waiting at a distance to receive the sentence, that should separate her from this state of being, to rejoin her children in another; when the youngest, coming from the place of execution, for a purpose which the cruel mercy of Antiochus desired might be accomplished, thus began, as soon as he had reached his mother's presence:

" Oh my dear, dear mother, they are dead," (said he): " my six unpitied brothers have endured their tyrant's malice, like good Israelites; and this is all the consolation I can give you, when you stand in such great need of consolation."

The Mother. Yes, dear son, I do indeed: but God be witness that I find it in the news you bring me.

The Son. Is it possible?

The Mother. One thing, however, grieves me. I was waiting for the moment of my martyrdom, and thinking I had no one sorrow left me to go through with. I had bade farewell to all my children. " I shall meet them in
another

"another state of being," said I to myself, "where we shall never part again." But your return thus unexpectedly renews the pangs of separation. Yes, dear child, that are the last God's goodness gave me, we must part with one another. Why then did you think of coming to disturb the settled calmness of my soul.

The Son. The tyrant, pitying, as he says, my youth, has bid me thus return, that I may work upon you to retract the resolution a false faith thus nourishes in your deluded bosom, and not cast away (for such was his expression) both yourself and me, as you have done my brothers.

The Mother. That, dear child, restores me my late peace of mind, and I will now no more complain that you are come to interrupt it. On the other hand, I have sufficient courage to receive you now, an unexpected, I must own, but not, on that account, heaven witness for me, an unwelcome visitor; for you are sent, that I may have one further opportunity of disappointing the revengeful tyrant, and evincing one more token of my faith. Tell, tell me therefore, in what manner your dear brothers suffered death. I will anticipate the joy of our re-union; and in this world have
a foretaste

a foretaste of the same. Inform me of it, therefore, I conjure you, and hide nothing that concerns their death. The tyrant gives you leave to do thus much, by sending you at present hither. If your first appearance shocked my bosom, let this tale you have to tell, console me. Manly has their suffering been, I doubt not, and *that* thought sustained me while at distance I was waiting the arrival of my own death's moment: let then your narration certify entirely what beforehand I was almost sure of. Though the account I ask for be a horrid one, yet shall the way in which I bear it, be another honour to me as a martyr, and another disappointment to the tyrant's cruel purpose. Instantly begin then, lest you should not have sufficient time allowed to finish.

The Son. Yes, dear mother, I will give you this affecting story, since you say it will console you; and repeat exactly, word for word, whatever passed between my brothers and Antiochus; for such is the impression this sad scene has made upon my mind, that if I were to live a thousand years or longer, never would the recollection of it be effaced.

The Mother. No more, dear son: You speak, but not to satisfy my wishes.

The Son. True, I do not; and will there-
fore

fore enter on the melancholy business. My dear eldest brother, seeing every one about him at a stand, and wishing, as he did, to have the tyrant comprehend, as soon as possible, that he could exercise no power upon his will, cried out: "Why do you stay your persecuting spirit? What would you know further? Let the executioner begin: for I am ready to endure ten thousand deaths, much rather than transgress the ordinances of my fathers." Whereupon, the tyrant, being in a rage, commanded that a cauldron should be heated, and my brother's tongue cut out, as also his extremities. They were cut off; when being yet quite sensible of what he suffered, he was thrown into the cauldron, and, while frying, seemed to brave the fury of the tyrant, so that his last words, pronounced while instruments were getting ready to cut out that tongue which so enraged the tyrant, in the manner of his meeting death—seemed verified.

The Mother. And what were those last words?

The Son. "That God looked down while he was suffering, and had pleasure in him, as his servant Moses, in his song, expressed himself, when speaking of the Almighty, he declared he *should have pleasure in his servants.*"

The Mother. And with this he suffered?

The Son. Yes, even so, dear mother.

The

The Mother. God be praised for all things.
And the second?

The Son. He, alas, was next led up, his elder brother being dead; and made a mocking stock. The executioner first scalped him, when Antiochus enquired if he would eat before he gave command to torture him, in every member of his body? But my brother answered, No. Whereon, the tyrant bade the executioner proceed to torture him. He bore it with the utmost patience, and cried out, with his departing breath, in accents that still more enraged Antiochus: "You take us like a fury
" out of this bad world; but God shall give
" us an eternal habitation, for obeying, as we
" do, his laws."

The Mother. And so he suffered?

The Son. Without uttering one more word. And so too, my third, fourth, and other brothers, every one expired with no less constancy.

The Mother. And you, dear child?

The Son. And I, dear mother, am come hither, by the tyrant's order, to preserve, as he expressed himself, both my own life, and yours.

The Mother. And do you wish then to preserve your life?

The Son. Do you, dear mother?

The

The Mother. Oh my son! I have endured the loss of your six brothers, and rejoice in their decease. Judge then, if after this, I can desire to lengthen out my own existence, upon terms that God will not allow me to comply with.

The Son. What shall I reply to this, but that your great example, added to the valour of my brothers, strengthens me to undergo that death which is reserved me by Antiochus. And yet he sent me hither to promote a very different purpose. Be, however, witness for me, mother, that I have not said one word, expressing any love I entertained for life.

The Mother. None, none. I say it in your praise, and it rejoices me to do so.

The Son. Ha! here comes the tyrant; and our doom draws on apace. Yes, yes; I see it, in a manner hanging by a thread, and ready to fall on us.

Antiochus (coming in with guards). Well, will you avail yourselves of my compassion, and not persevere in such a sottish scorn of life, till my insulted mercy dooms you both to death? What say you, woman, to my grace and favour manifested in thus sending your now sole surviving son, that you may each persuade the other, not to throw away that life I would preserve.

The

The Mother. Disturb not our last moments, with an offer of such cruel mercy. I am speaking to my son, and would not now be interrupted.—Dear, dear son, how you first came into the world I cannot tell; for I could never give you breath, or know by what strange means it was connected with your frame: but what I know is this, that the Creator of the universe will, in his mercy, give you life again in future, if in this world, for his sake, you scorn it.

Antiochus. Strange infatuation!

The Mother. Therefore, son, take pity on your mother, that for nine long months supported you, a growing burthen in her womb, and gave you suck three years, and brought you up, enduring all the trouble of your education. Yes, dear child, I say take pity on your mother. Meditate on earth and heaven. Consider first, the earth: this you must quit at last. Consider, in the next place, heaven that you should go to. Meditate, I say, upon these different places, and disdain the executioner, that being worthy of your brothers, you may die, and in the world to which the tyrant's malice speedily will send me, I may boast of being able to account you still my child.

Antiochus. Insensible to what should be a yearning mother's feelings!—But I will not talk

talk with such an one. Your son may listen more to nature, than a parent ; therefore, though I know not why I should evince such mercy in behalf of one that has already spurned it, will I once more do my utmost to call back his love of life ; and *force* him to commiserate his situation. Hear me, therefore, this last time, young man ; for by whatever oath you may yourself conceive most binding, do I promise. I will make you both a wealthy and a happy man, if you adjure before me the religion of your fathers ; and not only *that*, but I will likewise take you for my friend, and trust you with affairs.

The Son. Peace, monster ! go and howl forth your detested offers to such only as are like you.

Antiochus. And is this your gratitude for my compassion ?

The Son. Gratitude ! I owe you nothing, neither will I.—Nought except this warning of what certainly shall come to pass. And oh that it might lead you to repentance, notwithstanding your ferocious dealing to a mother and my six departed brothers.

Antiochus. Well ; go on, for I will hear how well you can philosophize so near that fire which your temerity is kindling to consume you.

The Son. Rather say, my sins ; for therefore
do

do I suffer: but though God be angry with me for a season, he shall, notwithstanding, be soon friendly to his servant: Yet, O godless man, and of all human kind most wicked, be not you, on that account, exalted; for at present though you triumph, yet hereafter, through God's judgment, shall your pride be punished.

Antiochus. Punished! but by whom shall I be punished? By that God who does so little for your sake? So little! Who does nothing?

The Mother. Yes; it is by him we are enabled to meet death with resignation, and defy the malice that now persecutes us.

The Son. If the God we worship does so little for us, what then do your gods perform in your behalf, save thus exciting you to deeds of murder, that proclaim much rather the brute beast than man?

Antiochus. Perdition! Do I know I am a king, and shall I hear all this? Away! hence with them to the fire. Pluck them asunder.

The Mother. Stay, inhuman king. I only ask a moment's respite; and is that too great a favour? Oh my son! may the Almighty, in this trying moment, in the last you are to have, be with you. All my happiness, in this life, rises from the thought that, by the tyrant's favour, I shall not be present to behold you suffer.

Antiochus.

Antiochus. Say you? I bethink myself.—
Guards take them both together to the fire, and
place the mother so that she may see this son
of hers expire in torment.

The Mother. Be it so, since God thinks proper. I submit with resignation to his pleasure.

Antiochus. If I thought so, I would countermand my order: but no more; bring them along.—

The Son. Oh mother! mother!*

* From this Article we pass to Job's affecting story; not that such an order is consistent with chronology, since Job, if ever such a person lived, was long before Antiochus, just mentioned, but because the book that bears his name comes nearly after what we have been now relating.

CCCLVIII.

†JOB'S BEGINNING OF AFFLICTIONS.

SCENE. *A field.*

JOB.

HOW vain is every earthly source of happiness to comfort and support the soul!
Ten times has God renewed my image in
seven

† This history of Job is thought to have been written by the prophet Moses, while he lived among the Midianitish people;

seven goodly sons, and three fair daughters, whom my neighbours seek occasion to be always praising, and are eager to extol my enviable situation in so promising a family. My substance also is seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, with as many asses, that are every day producing young. I have a numerous household, and the nations round about pay homage to my grandeur, saying: "There is no one like me for abundance in these eastern regions of the world."—Will not all this suffice then for my happiness? It will not; for alas! upon the other hand, I am unhappy, and unless I had some comfort in the thought that for myself I have endeavoured to be upright before God, should die in desperation. To assuage my griefs, however, I am not without a remedy, and can exhibit, in my person, an example of the benefits God grants to such as fear him, and observe his ways; for accidents shall not entirely grind them in the dust. But what can render me in any sort unhappy, hav-

ple; fifteen hundred and twenty years before the birth of Christ. Its moral seems to be, that in the midst of our afflictions, we should never justify ourselves; while those, who see us suffering, should not shew their lack of charity, by thinking we are punished for our sins by the Almighty.

ing, as too many would imagine, such large means of being happy, and contented with myself? Ah me! how miserable is the man who in his very bosom bears about the serpent that annoys his life! My family! my children! They alas! are every one the serpent I have cherished near my heart, and who, in retribution for the warmth communicated to them, are continually threatening to destroy me, seeing they conduct their lives without a thought of God. Of my seven sons, each takes upon himself to feast in turn, and send for his six brothers and three sisters, so that they may all be merry with him. Is this kind of life according to the pattern I have set them? No; and yet, instead of any reformation, their irregularity of conduct is increased, whenever I proceed to set the evil of their ways before them; for much earlier, the next day, do they begin their dissolute behaviour in the morning, and continue it much nearer the succeeding midnight than was usual with them. Even at present, though the sun be hardly up, are they assembled in their eldest brother's house, and drinking wine. On this account, have I thus early left my bed myself, though needing the repair of rest much more than in the younger season of my life, and sent to sanctify them. Nay, in my paternal

ternal care, I have done more ; for anxious, with my worship, to anticipate their riots, I am come from offering up burnt sacrifices for their sin ; since certainly they sin, by such a thoughtless and unprofitable mode of dissipating precious time. And who alas can answer, that this sin they yield to is the worst ! Who knows but those intoxicating liquors that go round in such great plenty at their feasts, do not excite them to curse God !—Excite them to curse God ! The idea is too horrible for thought ! Let me go home ; and in my chamber end what I have just been doing at the altar. Let me pray that God would not proceed to judgment on them for their daily scorn of my repeated admonitions.

A Messenger (entering at a distance). Oh my lord ! my lord ! Let me intreat you only for a word or two.

Job. What means this outcry ?—Well ?

Messenger. What words shall I make use of, to inform you of the great calamity I have been witness to ? Your oxen were within this hour past plowing, and the asses feeding quietly beside them, when a band of the Sabeans coming up, took every one away as spoil. Yea, they have slain the servants likewise, and I only of these last could save myself, and am escaped to bring this melancholy news.

Job. The oxen and the asses were not necessary to my happiness; for *with* them, I have long been miserable, and can only be unhappy for the time to come without them. I compassionate the servants that have suffered, but rejoice, good friend, that you are safe. Give God the praise, while I submit to his good pleasure in this life. But who again comes hither?

Messenger. This must be a second Messenger. Pray God, he come with better news! though, by his countenance, I fear it greatly.

A second MESSENGER comes in.

Job. Well, friend, you seem as if you would say something.

Second Messenger. Oh my dear good master! I have dismal news to tell you!

Job. Yes, good friend, *that* has your countenance already told me. But what dismal news?

Second Messenger. The fire of God hath suddenly come down from heaven, and utterly burnt up the sheep, together with their keepers, of which last I only am escaped to tell the dismal story.

Job. I lament not for the sheep; but could have wished the keepers had been spared. Poor men! Yet thanks be to God's providence that you have been preserved. Your joy, on this occasion, friend, is mine.

Messenger.

Messenger. Alas! here comes another Messenger. He likewise, as I fear, has grievous news to tell.

Job. His looks proclaim no less.—(*To a third Messenger coming in*). What more have I to suffer?

Third Messenger. Ah! my lord, the desperate Chaldeans have attacked your herdsmen in the field. They came upon us in three bands, and seized the camels, carrying them away. Yea they have slain the feeders, and I only am escaped to bring the melancholy tidings.

Job. God be thanked.

Third Messenger. Be thanked, my lord?

Job. Yes, thanked, for two great blessings softening this calamity: that, in the first place, you yourself are saved; and in the next place, that my children were not there. I might have lost them too, and how could I have borne that grief?

Third Messenger. Oh how indeed?

Job. They were assembled last together at their banquet, where the camels were surprized. Had they continued there, they too would have been carried off: But thanks be to God's mercy, that before hand they had changed the scene, and therefore are preserved. This day's events have made me poor, yet in its consequences,

I may probably be rich ; for who can tell but that this poverty I have incurred may open my deluded children's eyes to see the error of their ways.

A Fourth Messenger (entering unseen by Job).
Oh horror ! horror !

Job (starting). Have I more to undergo ? Speak, speak, however what you have to say ; for I can bear the worst, since what would be far worse than every thing has happily not taken place ; my children being spared.

Fourth Messenger. Alas ! alas ! good master ! Would to God I could but say as much, or be quite silent, though, in that case, your calamity would very soon transpire.

Job. You speak as if my children had been likewise carried off. They may have shared an equal fortune with my flocks and herds : Yet say not, all at once, so much ; for I can only bear those evils I have been already told of. Spare me, therefore, this last grief, and do not tell me, my dear children are made captives too.

Fourth Messenger. I will not : yet what consolation will that give you ? I am nothing but a servant to bring news, not make it. Think not, then, but that my heart would willingly conceal what with my tongue I utter, namely,
that

that your children were all met, and making merry in their eldest brother's house, when suddenly—

Job. Alas! alas! My children are made captives then, and I shall never see them more.

Fourth Messenger. Yes, you may see them: but where? where? and how? Judge after I have told you all; for they were feasting in their eldest brother's house: and lo, there came a wind directly from the wilderness, and smote each corner of the dwelling, which fell down upon their heads so unexpectedly, that every soul was crushed to death within it; they, together with the servants: and I only am escaped with information of their miserable fate.

Job (having rent his garments). Naked came I first of all into the world; and naked shall I quit the world! God gave; and God hath reassumed what he bestowed upon me. Blessed be his name!

Fourth Messenger. We are a great way from the dwelling; and our master may be overcome with his affliction on the way, unless we bear him home. By my advice then, let us lose no time. Already is the fashion of his countenance considerably altered.

Third Messenger. He begins, methinks, to seem another man. Your hand then, friends,

and let us carry him between us to the house.—
Oh miserable day!

CCCLIX. CCCLX. CCCLXI.

JOB'S INCREASED AFFLICTION, HIS
SELF-JUSTIFYING SPEECHES, AND
THE UNCHARITABLE CENSURE
OF HIS FRIENDS.

SCENE. *A room in Job's house.*

JOB (*upon the ground*).

JOB'S WIFE (*entering to him*).

CAN afflictions come from God? If so,
how is he good, and, what some call him,
the compassionating Father of his children?
Surely they, who cultivate this virtue, find it
nothing but an empty name. So certainly, at
least, has my unhappy husband, by experience,
learned. Upon the ground! His misery can
never lay him lower than he is. But, surely,
it had been enough that we should lose our
cattle and ten children all at once, without this
bodily distemper of sore boils in every limb
about

about him being added. I must own, indeed, that from the fortitude with which he underwent his loss, I was not authorized to hope he would discern the fallacy of that implicit trust he has reposed at all times in his God: but, at the first appearance of this plague, when he sat down on ashes, and began to scrape himself all over with a potsherl, I had reason to suppose he would have seen the extravagance of his belief, and not continued to revere the hand that smites him as it does. What wonder, therefore, if in such a state he should have lost those friends, who, in the time of his prosperity, clave to him. That is no new thing. And yet, these four, of whom I come to tell him, are exceptions to the rule. Their wish is to condole with, if not comfort him. But we shall see what sort of comfort they bring with them. Certainly, he has not heard a syllable I have been saying, being, as he seems, asleep. If so, let me not wake him, though with such good news.—(*Going near*). But no: he moves, and I may venture to disturb him.—(*Calling out*). Husband! Job!

Job. Well?—who calls thus?

The Wife. Your wife: how is it with you?

Job. Ha! bad, bad enough, dear wife!

The Wife. And still cleave fast to your integrity.

grity. Mistaking man! Curse God and die; for of your virtue this sad situation is the only consequence. It is a living death. To die would be a blessing, in comparison of this afflicting state.

Job. Curse God and die! You speak as many of the foolish of your sex would speak; for shall we always be receiving blessings from the Almighty, and refuse to suffer any of the afflictions he decrees?

The Wife. It is with sorrow I observe, unhappy but dear husband, that misfortunes cannot make you wise, and therefore I have done; nor would I now obtrude myself so near the bed of your affliction, if it were not that four friends are come; four friends, not joining with the rest who have belied their protestations made when every thing looked chearful round about you, and their friendship was not wanted. —No, dear husband, for myself, I would not have intruded thus upon you. At their importunity, I come; for they request admission to you.

Job. How! Four friends together, when I thought I had not one remaining! And who are they?

The Wife. Let me see, if I remember. In the first place, Eliphaz the Temanite; then Zophar

Zophar the Naamathite; then Bildad called the Shuhite; and Elihu, son of Barachel, the Buzite.

Job. Yes, I know them every one. And are they such inestimable friends as thus to visit the unhappy, whom all others have forsaken? Let them enter. I may reap some consolation from their friendship. Go; for greatly I desire to see them.—(*The Wife goes out*).

Job (continuing). How, alas, am I reduced, that I should want the consolation of four friends, when lately I possessed so many. Let my birth-day be henceforward blotted out, when people said: "There is a man-child born into the world." Let it in future be not counted with the rest, because it shut not up my mother's womb: for then should I have slept with kings, with counsellors, and princes: but they come, I think.

Enter the Four Friends just mentioned.

Eliphaz. Alas! alas! is this then our late noble friend?

Zophar. This sufferer on the ground?

Bildad. We come with consolation, if our wishes so to do be but vouchsafed.

Elihu. And if you will rise up, and listen to us.

Job. Never. I am now returning to my dust;

dust; and this is the profound humiliation that best suits my wretchedness. You come to give me comfort. So much friendliness deserves my thanks; for certainly I need it. Give me, therefore, consolation, but thus prostrate let me listen to you, as becomes a man of so much sorrow.

Eliphaz. Be it as you wish, dear Job: but if we argue with you, let it not displease; for who can possibly refrain from speaking, when his friend is in distress. Behold, you will assert you have instructed many, and continually strengthened the weak hands, but that distress is, notwithstanding, come upon you. Hear me, therefore; for last night a vision stood before me, and this vision is the cause that I and my three friends are come to give you comfort, knowing you must stand in need thereof. When sleep weighs down men's eyelids, I beheld a spirit pass before me. It stood still, and yet I could not ascertain its form. I mused, however; and in musing, heard a voice that asked me, saying: "Shall the race
 " of mortal men be purer than their Maker?
 " Lo, the very angels in his sight are foolish,
 " how much more then such as dwell in earth-
 " ly habitations. They fall off, and perish in
 " the morning, at noon day, and in the even-
 " ing." This, dear Job, was what I dreamed,

Job.

Job. But needed there a dream, from God to shew me that I should not think myself as pure as he is, when I know that if in suffering I am lowly, he will then rise up in my defence, and prosper me?

Bildad. We came indeed, dear friend, to comfort you, and therefore, though our words be harsh, yet are they wholesome: be assured then, that the great Creator may be frequently severe, yet cannot be unjust. Of course, that if you suffer, you have sinned; and that your children have been punished by so terrible a fate, because they have transgressed.

Job. But surely, the Almighty visiteth the just as well as the unjust. Nay, it must certainly be as I say; for lo, the earth is given to enrich the wicked. May I not complain then in some sort or other? Is it such a grievous wickedness in me, if I expostulate with God, and ask him to what end he bruises in this manner his own-work? He knows I am not altogether like the wicked, and he knows too——

Zophar. Let me speak, good friends.—You justify yourself, dear Job; and that too in the sight of God. Such conduct he condemns; for we are all iniquitous. You should then, in the midst of your affliction, think of putting your iniquities away.

Job.

Job. Ah me! I can see plainly you are come to bring me nothing but cold consolation. Oh that you would rather hold your peace, then, and thus charitably shew your wisdom while I speak, whatever be the consequence; for while I justify myself, yet have I faith to trust in God, though he should slay me. Yet, O Lord, since man is of few days, and full of trouble, let me rest till as an hireling I have finished my day's work.

Eliphaz. My friendship, Job, excites me to express my feelings yet once more; for should a man, accounted wise, speak thus, proclaiming his own righteousness, as you do, and refraining from the work of prayer? You are condemned by your own testimony, and not ours. Why therefore does your heart revolt against God's spirit, and let words of such a nature issue from your lips; for what is man, that he should boast himself a moment righteous, when the Almighty puts no trust even in his saints?

Job. Yes, many things of this sort have I heard; and surely you are miserable comforters! So miserable, that I look upon you, and imagine God hath in your hands resigned me as a sport to the ungodly, for they scorn me while I pour my tears out in the sight of my Creator.

Bildad. Scorn you?

Job.

Job. Yes: for, if I am indeed a sinner, I myself shall be required to answer for the sin I have committed, and not you: but, in addition to the burthen God has laid upon me, I have many wrongs to mourn for, from my fellow-creatures; for my brethren have withdrawn themselves far from me. I required my servant's ministry, but he refused it. Yea, my wife affected not to know me, when I earnestly besought her for the children that proceeded from my body. *You* then should take pity on me, as on one God's hand has smitten.

Eliphaz. Yes; God's hand indeed has smitten you, and if we estimate the sin by the affliction, it must be enormous, though we do not know it. In your heart perhaps you have desired to take a pledge for nothing from a brother; stripped the almost naked of the little cloathing on him; churlishly refused a draught of water to the thirsty; when the hungry asked for bread, denied it; or sent weeping widows from your habitation without comfort: and for one or other of those sins, or such as may be like them, is this trouble come upon you. Seek not therefore to be justified; but rather make confession of your sins to God, and he will certainly build up again your tabernacle.

Elihu. You have done: and therefore let me speak.

Speak. I came, indeed (*to his three Friends*) at your solicitation to console our friend, and would have spoken sooner, but considered I was young, while you were far advanced in years, on which account I was afraid of speaking. No, nor should I even now make known my thoughts, but that your reasonings upon either side alike appear exhausted. In the first place, then, dear Job, my spirit prompts me to condemn the idea you give way to of your righteousness; and, in the next place, you, my friends, because you have too rigorously censured the afflicted: but of this no more, at present. Let us take our leave, and when we meet again, which, if our friend think fit, may be to-morrow, once more enter into conversation on this matter, having in the mean time weighed it. Job may then find reason to abate in some sort of his confidence, and we of our severity in judgment. This is my advice: what think you of it?

Eliphaz. I, for my part, gladly would bring comfort with my visit, so that I consent.

Bildad. And I.

Zophar. And I.

Job. And I, alas! would fain find comfort. Let it be then as Elihu counsels. On the morrow, therefore, I entreat your presence near

the

the bed of my infirmity ; and, for the present, crave you would support me in ; for I would gladly try if I can sleep.

Elihu. Come on then ; rise, and lean upon my arm.

Job (while going out). Oh sore ! sore ! sore ! When shall I die, and be at rest for ever ! (*He goes out supported by his Friends*).

CCCLXII. CCCLXIII. CCCLXIV.

JOB CONSOLED, ENRICHED, AND RENDERED HAPPY.

SCENE. *Another room in JOB's house.*

JOB.
I HAVE bade adieu, and, as I hope, forever to the bed on which affliction lately stretched me ; for my spirit is rejoiced, and therefore my whole body much less pained. It is God's doing, who hath seen the righteousness, however little be the portion of it, I could boast of, and has visited my desolate abode with comfort. Satan, by his power, oppressed my outward frame ; but the Almighty hath relieved my soul within me. Therefore shall the latter henceforth spend itself in grateful worship,

ship, and the former——But, I see my four officious friends, far too officious for the purpose that first brought them hither.——Yes, according to their promise, I behold them coming. How will they consider matters, when I tell them with what comfort God has visited my slumbers, and established, in some sort of peace, my waking hours; for they shall know the whole, and be confounded.

Enter ELIHU, ELIPHAZ, BILDAD and ZOPHAR.

Elihu. We are come——But how is this? What change has happened? You seem quite another person!

Job. And I *am* so. Yesterday, when you had left me, and while still the pains I suffered kept me waking, I was troubled in my thoughts: but God, while I lay sleeping afterward, dispelled my anguish. What the chearful daylight could not get me, has Omnipotence, amid the gloom of midnight, poured upon me,——hope (I mean) of better days, and consolation in the hour of sorrow.

Elihu. You have had a dream then we must think, and that has been the means of comfort to you?

Job. My whole night, from sunset to the breaking of the day this morning, was consumed

sumed in visions. You came hither to console me ; but my thoughts while sleeping, have done that. Our pleasure by communication is increased. Shall I then tell you with what dreams God's spirit has refreshed my spirit, and by such means add new happiness to what I feel already?

Bildad. We are overjoyed, believe us, hearing this ; for though our admonitions were not gentle, they were salutary, and we could not hate you. But inform us what those dreams you speak of, were.

Zophar. Yes, do, good friend, and we will hear them with untired attention.

Eliphaz. What then were these dreams ? Begin your story.

Job. I was ruminating late last night on my distressful situation, thinking whether it were possible that I had justified myself without good reason in our previous conversation yesterday, and whether my afflictions had resulted from my sins. These were my waking thoughts ; nor were they broken off by sleep when it fell on me, but continued till the morning, when I woke ; in which blest interval of time, the Almighty, by his visions, eased my doubting mind, and set before me in what happened antecedently to my afflictions, the true cause why I have thus been smitten.

Elihu.

Elihu. Your beginning interests us, friend. Continue therefore.

Job. I was flourishing, methought, in all my former greatness, neither had my substance suffered diminution in the land. The day was likewise come, when, as you know, the sons of God present themselves before the Lord. They did so, and the evil spirit also stood among them. And the Lord, addressing Satan, asked him whence he came: "From going to and fro upon the earth," said he, "and walking up and down therein."

Bildad. Did Satan answer so?

Job. So I imagined; whereunto, the Lord replied,—and pardon me, dear friends, if I pronounce, in what I am about to say, my own applauses; for my dream was nothing less,—whereunto, I repeat, the Lord replied: "Hast thou remarked my servant Job, that there is no one like him, perfect as he is, and upright in his ways?"—I heard this question put to Satan, when he made the following answer: "Doth this Job appear then such for nought? Hast thou not placed a hedge about him, and about his house, and every thing he hath, both in the fields, and in the city? Thou hast blessed his handy-works, and the prodigious substance he possesses is increasing every

“ every day. Put forth, however, thy Al-
 “ mighty hand upon these multiplied good
 “ things, and he will curse thee to thy face.”

This was a dreadful requisition on the evil spirit's part! but so I dreamed; and God, methought, made answer, saying: “ Lo! what-
 “ ever he possesses in the field, or under his
 “ own roof, is in thy power: do what thou
 “ wilt therewith; but see thou put not forth
 “ thy hand against his person.” Satan, having heard thus much, departed from before the Almighty, and immediately, so instant was the operation of his malice, came there servant after servant, with intelligence of losses happening to me in the field by plundering, and the fire of God from heaven, with the winds that smote the dwelling where my children were assembled at the banquet. All this ruin was accomplished in my dream, as it had happened in reality before.

Zophar. You underwent the loss then both of goods and children in your dream, as if you had not suffered it before.

Job. I did; and it was God who shewed me that afflictions are from him. My dream, in that respect, consoled me therefore, and in sleep, I said: “ He chastens me, that I may
 “ gain instruction. My distress is not a pu-
 “ nishment

“nishment sins call for, but a trial of my
 “virtue, so that notwithstanding what I suf-
 “fer, I may still be high in the Almighty’s
 “love, whatever human beings think;” for,
 in my dream, I recollected the hard sayings
 you had yesterday passed on me.

Bildad. Yes: our sayings, we confess, seem-
 ed harsh; but they were such for your advan-
 tage. We may possibly have been too zealous,
 but we wished, that by self-condemnation in
 men’s sight, you might be more acceptable in
 God’s.

Job. I will admit it was your love that spoke;
 but I was then deep sunk in sorrow, and thought
 ill of those that might have loved me most:
 but God has, in the end, consoled me, and
 whatever you may urge in future, shall be
 listened to as the advice of friends. Accept of
 this atonement for past peevishness, when I
 was ill at ease, and hear what I have still to
 say?

Eliphaz. What! you continued dreaming
 still?

Job. I did so; for my sleep took in the
 story of whole days: or rather, my first dream
 was followed by another; neither knew I what
 had in the interval been done. Methought,
 that quickly after the first day had passed, when,

as

as I said, the sons of God assembled in his sight, there came another, and the evil spirit, as before, appeared among them likewise; when the Lord, again addressing Satan, asked him: Whence he came. "From going to
 "and fro upon the earth," said he, "and walking up and down therein." "Whereunto," God replied: "hast thou remarked my servant Job; that there is no one like him,
 "perfect as he is, and upright in his ways?" "Yea, still does he hold fast to his integrity,
 "although thou movedst me against him lately without cause, and though too he has suffered a calamity so grievous as the loss of
 "every thing he had."

Elihu. Aye, hitherto both dreams have been the same; and now we are to see what follows.

Job. It will soon be finished. Satan answered the Almighty thus: "At present, he
 "hath suffered only from without; but for the sake of life, what will not men proceed
 "to? Put forth then thy hand, and smite him to the bone; when surely he will curse thee
 "to thy face, however he has yet abstained." And God made answer as before: "Behold,
 "I leave him still at thy disposal: do whatever thou thinkest proper, even with his person,
 "which was not permitted thee before; but
 "see

“ see that thou attempt not on his life. Spare
“ only that ; and for the rest, pursue what
“ course thou hast devised already.” — Satan
having got this second leave, and *that* extended
so much farther than the first, went out ; and
I was covered with fore boils, from head to
foot. Alas ! I felt them, in reality, upon me ;
and my sleeping thoughts were so much troubled
with the anguish, that I woke ; but not with-
out remembering what I had already done,
in being visited with those fore boils. I sat me
down upon a bed of ashes ; and, to mitigate
the pain I suffered, got myself a potsherd,
which I used to scrape my wounds with.—
Thus, have I informed you, friends, by what
strange means the Almighty has consoled me,
for my frame is in his hands, and therefore,
notwithstanding, Satan is permitted for a while
to buffet me, I shall not ultimately die, but
live, and publicly declare my Maker’s glory.
My already mending frame of body, added to
the calm within my spirit, is an earnest of this
truth.

Here ends the Article, as far as what it
treats of can be thrown into the form of dia-
logue.—The book of Job goes on to tell us, that
the sufferer, by a voice from heaven, was, in the
sequel, wrought on to make full confession of his
great

great unworthiness, and with a contrite heart retract those justifying speeches he had uttered. By a voice, we say, from heaven; which voice was that of God, who, to evince that Job had nothing like a title to complain, since the Creator of the universe did all things for the best, proceeded to give instances of his transcendent wisdom in the wonderful production of the earth, sea, sun, snow, hail, winds, thunder, lightnings, rain, and ice, as well as of the goat, wild ass, hind, unicorn, stork, peacock, ostrich, horse, hawk, eagle, behemoth, and whale.

The suffering Job's now altered conduct was acceptable to God; and therefore, after having, in a whirlwind, signified his anger against three of those four visitors who had so unrelentingly condemned their friend, not taking pity upon one who they could see was suffering under his uplifted hand, he bade them deprecate him with an offering; so that he might not deal with them in proportion to their folly. And "my servant Job," continued God, "shall pray too for you." He did so; on which, the Lord converted his affliction into joy, and, by degrees, increased again his wealth, till it became much greater than at any time before the visitation spoken of, it had been. In the sequel, being full of days, he died, beholding,

as the scripture says, four generations of his children, notwithstanding his first ten were brought to that untimely end we have before related.

By way of introduction to the following Article, it may be proper to remark, that about 161 years before our Saviour, did the Romans come to have transactions with the Jews; between which last and them, a league of friendship and alliance was concluded. After this, not more than one and thirty years had passed, before Judea, by a train of unexpected circumstances, was erected once again into a monarchy. To this strange revolution, many years succeeded, when *that* prophetess, called Anna, of the tribe of Aser, mentioned in the second chapter of St. Luke, becoming, as is there expressed, a widow, took up her abode within the Temple, which she never quitted afterwards, but prayed to God, and fasted on occasions, for the space of eighty-four whole years together, till she saw the promised Saviour, while an infant, brought into the Temple.

In the three and sixtieth year before our Saviour's birth, did Pompey take Jerusalem.
This

This Pompey was a Roman General, and marvelously seconded the views of that ambitious common-wealth, of which he was a member, to subdue or conquer the whole world. It is, however, to be noted, that the views of Pompey were not fixed upon the riches of the Jewish people, therefore did he spare the treasures of their Temple, and was satisfied with making them, in future, tributary to the Romans. They continued tributary twenty years and upwards, being governed by themselves; but sixteen years, or nearly after they were thus reduced, began the empire of the Cæsars (from which time the Roman empire dates its first commencement), Julius having conquered Pompey at the battle of Pharsalia. Nine years after this, the Roman Senate pushing their designs still further, would not let the Jews, in future, rule themselves, but portioned their whole state into four different provinces, called Tetrarchies, of which, *that* called Judea, was put under Herod, son of Antipas.

This Herod had not been upon the throne two years; but finding those he governed adverse to him, he besieged Jerusalem. He took it the succeeding year, and made each quarter of the place a scene of slaughter. Herod, after this, secured himself in the possession of his

kingdom, which he governed nineteen years, without the least degree of molestation from his subjects; so that then he undertook to gratify them, by beginning to rebuild the Temple, which in ten years' time, or seventeen years before the birth of Christ, was finished.

CCCLXV.

CCCLXV. CCCLXVI.

LUKE i. ver. 11 to 26.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE BAPTIST, AND CHRIST JESUS.

* BEFORE CHRIST 5.

SCENE. *A Room in the House of ZACHARIAS.*

† MARY and ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH.

OH welcome, welcome, dearest cousin Mary.
Trust me, this so unexpected visit fills my
heart with joy!

Mary. And purposely to fill my heart with
P 3
joy

* This requires some explanation; for how could Christ have been conceived five years before his birth? To this, the answer is, that the beginning of the common Christian æra is not reckoned to take place till four years after Christ was born, viz. when Joseph and his mother brought him back from Egypt, to their former dwelling-place at Nazareth.

† This Mary was the wife of Joseph, born in David's line, from whom the Saviour was to spring; for David, to whose time we have already traced the Saviour's ancestors, begat king Solomon upon Bathsheba; and so on, as is recorded at the seventh and nine succeeding verses of the first of Matthew: See the names; of which, there have been several introduced already in the progress of this work.

joy, or rather to encrease the joy I find therein already, am I come to see you; for believe me, I have wonderful events to speak of; and besides, your hilly country is so lonesome, that my dear Elizabeth wants company. Thus was it I debated of your state within myself, and therefore, though not less for my own pleasure, am I here.

Elizabeth. For our joint pleasure be it, as assuredly it is for mine; since blessed are you, cousin, among women; yea, and blessed is the fruit within your womb.

Mary. You know then, cousin, how I am become a happy woman. By what means?—

Elizabeth. By what, excepting through the ministry of God; for could I otherwise have known it? and, thus knowing it, well may I wonder at the mother of my Lord's vouchsafing me this visit; for no sooner had your salutation sounded in my ears, but it appeared a token to the babe within my womb, that leaped for very joy.

Mary. May he, in future, be your joy, dear cousin. As for me, my soul, with transport, magnifies the Lord, who hath regarded his low handmaid's situation; for behold from henceforth, every race of men shall call me blessed; since he, that is acknowledged great, hath honoured

noured me, and holy is his name, his mercy being upon them that fear him throughout every generation. He hath shewed us strength, hath scattered all the proud in the imagination of their heart, put down the mighty from their seat, and lifted up the lowly. He hath filled the hungry with good things, but empty sent away the rich. He hath extended help and comfort to his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he promised our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Elizabeth. Have you done, dear cousin? I have all the while kept silence, being, as I was, unwilling to cut short the language of your exultation; but inform me, Mary, in what manner did the angel of the Lord salute you, when the tidings of this blest conception were at first announced?

Mary. Oh, glorious tidings, that still sound delightful in my ear! for who would have supposed that *I* should be selected to redeem the house of Israel? I was sitting thoughtful in my house at Nazareth, when suddenly the angel entered to me, saying: "Hail, for thou art highly favoured! God is with thee! and most blessed art thou among women!"

Elizabeth. Glorious tidings truly! And what felt you, while the angel was thus making known his message?

Mary. I was troubled, and considered in my mind what sort of salutation this might be; when lo, the angel graciously began again: “Fear not, beloved Mary; for with God, thou hast found favour. And behold thou shalt conceive, and have a son; and thou shalt call him Jesus. He shall be acknowledged great, and nations own him as the offspring of the Highest; for the Lord shall give him David’s throne to sit on. He shall rule for ever in the house of Jacob, and his kingdom have no end.”

Elizabeth. But said you nothing, when the angel had done speaking?

Mary. Yes, dear cousin. I replied as follows: “How shall these things be, since hitherto I have not known a man?” To which, the angel answered: “Man’s assistance is not necessary here. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and a power peculiar to the Highest overshadow thee; and therefore shall that holy child, which is hereafter to spring from thee, be entitled, as he is, the Son of God.”

Elizabeth. And did the angel finish here?

Mary. Oh, no; since what may interest you more, dear cousin, is as follows: for “behold,” said he, increasing those divine emotions

tions I experienced in my heart while he was speaking, "thy relation also hath conceived
 "a son in her old age, and this is the sixth
 "month with her that was accounted barren;
 "since with God, thou knowest that nothing
 "is impossible." What could I answer, in
 return to such a gracious message sent me from
 above, unworthy as I was? "Behold," said I,
 "the handmaid of the Lord! Be every thing
 "according to thy word;" which I had hardly
 uttered, when my heavenly visitor departed,
 leaving me to meditate upon this news, as it
 concerned myself and you; and which, I doubt
 not, we have both already had sufficient reason
 to expect will be confirmed.

Elizabeth. Yes, dearest Mary; every thing
 is so; and after having long deplored my child-
 less situation, I am now become the happiest
 of my sex. But let me, in my turn, tell *you*,
 by what strange means I was informed of my
 approaching happiness.—

Mary. Stay, cousin; for as yet I have not
 mentioned every thing.

Elizabeth. Is there still more?

Mary. More grace and favour shewn me at
 God's hand; for when the angel paid me this
 great visit, I was then, you know, unmarried,
 but betrothed. The alteration in my person

could not but attract the observation of my friends and neighbours. Where then was the wonder, if the man, on whom I had bestowed my heart, should see it? With concern he saw it: and, as afterwards he told me, pitying the unhappy object of his choice, his tenderness would not permit him to expose me as a public warning, for the sake of other women who might sin, as he imagined I had done, and therefore he designed to put me from him privily: but while he pondered on these matters, the same angel of the Lord that had appeared to me, stood likewise before him, one night, or rather morning, in a vision, saying: “ Joseph, son of
“ David, fear not to receive in wedlock thy
“ betrothed; for that increasing burthen in
“ her womb, which makes thee so uneasy, is
“ produced within her by the Holy Ghost. And
“ when she is delivered, thou shalt give the
“ name of Jesus to her infant, who shall be
“ a son; for he shall save his people from their
“ sins.” Such was the gracious vision that removed my husband’s just uneasiness, and saved my reputation from the slanders that already were gone forth; for he arose, and as the angel had advised him, took me the succeeding day to wife. Thus have I told you the whole story of my happiness; and now, dear cousin, make
me

me happier, by communicating yours ; for I will listen to your tale, no less attentive, while you speak, than you have been to mine.

Elizabeth. With pleasure I comply, and will begin from that first day which made me happy. It is somewhat more at present than six months, when Zacharias, in the order of his course, was at the altar, burning incense ; and exactly at the moment I would speak of, were the people praying every one without, when there appeared an angel standing on his right. And when my husband saw the vision, he was troubled, and great dread fell on him, as I learnt upon his coming home. But, “ fear not, “ Zacharias” said the angel, “ for thy prayer “ is heard by the Almighty, and thy wife shall “ bear thee in due time a son, on whom thou “ shalt bestow the name of John. And thou “ shalt be a joyful father : yea, and many like- “ wise shall have gladness at his birth ; for he “ shall be considered great in the Almighty’s “ sight. Of wine, or any other liquor like “ it, shall he never drink, but be replenished “ with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s “ womb. And many, born in Israel, shall he “ turn to God through that great prophet that “ is quickly to be born into the world ; for “ John shall go before him in the power and

“ spirit of Elias, to reform the hearts of fathers, by inclining them to look upon their children as the race of Abraham, and inspire the disobedient with that wisdom, which the just, and none but them, possess.”

Mary. And what said Zacharias?

Elizabeth. For a while, dear cousin, he stood silent. The astonishment occasioned by such unexpected tidings struck him dumb. And, when, at last, he was enabled to say any thing, he told the angel that he wanted faith to credit such a promise. “ By what token, therefore,” asked my husband, “ shall I know it will be verified, since I am old myself, nor is my wife less ancient?” This was Zacharias’ question, and the angel answered:—But here comes my husband: he has heard of your arrival, and desires to see you.

Mary. Yes, I see him likewise.—(*To Zacharias coming in*). Oh, my reverend cousin! I was just now speaking of you, and need scarcely ask if you are well and happy.—Tell me, notwithstanding,—(*Zacharias signs instead of speaking*). But what mean these tokens?

Elizabeth. I was going to inform you, when my husband interrupted me, that he is dumb.

Mary. Dumb, dear Elizabeth?

Elizabeth. Yes, dumb; which the remainder
of

of my story will explain. And look! how he gives signs I should continue it. It was, alas! a punishment inflicted on that doubt I mentioned: but God's will be done, since, in the current of our happiness, we can endure some straws of evil fortune floating on the surface.

Mary. Straws of evil fortune, do you call them, cousin? To be dumb! What misery can exceed it?

Elizabeth. Be not so afflicted. It is only for a season, as the sequel of my story will inform you.—I broke off with what my husband said expressive of his doubts on the occasion, when the angel answered: “I am
“ Gabriel, that for ever stand before the Al-
“ mighty, and at present am I sent to shew
“ thee these glad tidings: But behold thou
“ askest for some token that God's promises
“ may be relied upon: the token therefore he
“ vouchsafes is this; that from the present
“ hour, thou shalt be dumb, till this great
“ thing is come to pass, since thou believest
“ not my words, which, in their season, shall
“ be certainly fulfilled.”—And here, the angel finishing, departed. All this time the croud without were waiting, and expressing to each other, their astonishment, that Zacharias tarried so much longer than was usual in the temple:
but

but at last, when they were almost tired of staying, he came forth ; and by his beckoning, made them understand that he had seen a vision. This, dear Mary, is the account I had to give you. Zacharias put it down in writing for me, after he came home.

Mary. Thanks, dear Elizabeth ; and thanks, that you have eased my heart respecting this misfortune of my cousin, which, I see, is to be done away, when we are all made happy in the accomplishment of those great things we look for. God, for Zacharias' sake, vouchsafe they may the sooner come to pass.

Elizabeth. Your prayer is what it should be. But what hinders us from going in to talk at leisure of these matters, which are so important, that provided your abode among us were much longer than you mean to make it, we should not have time enough for conversation ? Come ; your things, I doubt not, are by this time properly disposed of in the house, and all the bustle over, which occasioned our withdrawing here to talk, where we might not be interrupted. But supposing it were otherwise, my husband will be now at hand to regulate that matter.

Mary. We shall find him something else, I hope, to do ; for by his ready tokens, I can
see

see he will be able to keep up a tolerable sort of conversation with us.

Elizabeth. Doubtless. This way therefore, cousin.

CCCLXVII.

LUKE i. ver. 57.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF JOHN.

BEFORE CHRIST 4.

SCENE. *The Temple.*

The PRIEST ; ZACHARIAS ; ELIZABETH, with the Infant JOHN, his SPONSOR, and ATTENDANTS.

The PRIEST.

BROTHER Zacharias, and you too Elizabeth his wife, may you be happy in this child, on whom we have fulfilled the law of Moses : he has undergone the painful operation, and is pacified. Now therefore is the time to name him.

Sponsor. By what other name than that of Zacharias can we call him ?

Elizabeth. No, not so ; but John.

Sponsor.

Sponsor. Why John, when there is no one of your family with such a * name?

Elizabeth. His name can be no other, for the reason we have given already. You have certainly forgot it. Let then Zacharias settle it.—(*To Zacharias*). Must not his name be John?—(*Zacharias nods assent*). I told you it was so.

Sponsor. But this is strange to set aside so general a custom in this manner! Zacharias does not understand the question.

The Priest. Bring us pen and paper, and let Zacharias write his answer down.

Zacharias (takes the pen and writes) His name is John.

The Priest. He has done so; and we must call him John, just as he said. (*Stretching forth his hand, and speaking to the child*) Receive the name of John; and from the moment thou art capable of thought, mayst thou consider it a sign of being ranked amongst God's people.

Zacharias (now recovering speech). Blessed be that God! The prophecy in all things is accomplished; and my speech at length restored me once again.

* It is usual among the Jews to call the first male from its paternal grandfather's.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. Great God !

Zacharias, You are astonished. Interrupt me not, however, while I give God thanks, that having punished my deficient faith with dumbness, he has once more loosed my tongue. I bless him both for the affliction, and the cure.

Sponsor. Can this we hear and see be real ? A religious fear darts through my veins, and every one I see is awed.

Elizabeth. Let us lay up this wonder in our hearts.

The Priest. I am embarrassed to divine what sort of child in future this will prove.

Zacharias. A wondrous one ; for while God's Spirit works within my heart, and I am filled with prophecy, I look into the womb of time, and see that the Almighty's hand shall constantly be with him ; that in future, he shall live divided from the multitude of men, and while he waxes strong in spirit, he shall abstinently shun those bodily conveniences, in which too many fatally indulge, and even fix his habitation in the desert, till God sends him on the great employment he is pre-ordained to fill, as the forerunner of that prophet, who shall speedily be born to save us from our sins : for all things, let the God of heaven be blessed, who hath thus visited his people, and bestowed a horn of
plentiful

plentiful salvation on them, in the house of his thrice favoured servant David, as he promised by his holy prophets, ever since the world began; from whom we have assurance of a safe asylum in the end from all our enemies, and the accomplishment of that great oath he swore to Abraham, our first father, that when placed in safety from the wickedness of those that hate us, we should have the blessed opportunity of serving him in righteousness our whole life through. And you, dear child, shall be the prophet of the Highest, since the function you are born for, is to go before the Lord; while he (so tender is God's mercy), in this day-spring from on high that visits us, is giving knowledge of salvation to his people, by remission of their sins; bestowing light on them that sit in darkness, and conducting their bewildered steps into the way of peace.

The Priest. Amen. Let us withdraw, and every one betake himself to contemplation on these great events.

CCCLXVIII.

LUKE ii. ver. 8.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF CHRIST'S
BIRTH TO SHEPHERDS.

BEFORE CHRIST 4.

SCENE. *Fields and sheep-cotes.*THREE SHEPHERDS *lying by a fire.*

FIRST SHEPHERD.

HOW fares it with you, brother?

Second Shepherd. Not quite well: the air is very cold. Our fire, methinks, is not enough to warm us, and I cannot sleep.*Third Shepherd.* Nor I.*First Shepherd.* Well, let us then sit up. Or what, if to divert our thoughts, as well as warm ourselves, we were to walk awhile?*Second Shepherd.* With all my heart. That may not be amiss; and thus I set the example. *(They all get up).**First Shepherd.* Every thing is still: the folds are not put to it, as we are, for slumber; but are comfortably off, while we complain.*Second Shepherd.* How goes the night? What think you?*Third*

Third Shepherd. Scarce past midnight, as I judge, by yon bright star.

First Shepherd. It is indeed a bright one; and methinks too, all the stars shine brighter than is common.

Second Shepherd. No; they are not brighter than is usual, when the frost is so intense. The air is purer, and the stars, on that account, appear so bright.

First Shepherd. Sure, in that quarter of the heavens there is a light much greater than is common in the night. The day seems ready, as it were, to break: and yet that part is towards the west.

Second Shepherd. How you mistake! That part is nothing but the milky way, which is at all times brighter, as we know, than any other quarter of the heavens.

Third Shepherd. That part, the milky way? What! in the west? How long have things been so? (*To the second Shepherd*). For my part, brother, I must think you in the wrong. I never saw it thus before. And see! for sure the brightness grows upon us!

First Shepherd. Truly does it. Are things changed, and will the day begin again at midnight?

Second Shepherd. God preserve us! I discern it now. What is this wonder?

Third

Third Shepherd. The whole western part of heaven will surely be as much enlightened, should the brightness still go on increasing in this manner, as if day had broke already, and the sun were nearly risen: for see! how rapidly the light advances.

Second Shepherd. It does so indeed! How awful! but why need we fear? If it had suddenly grown dark, I own, we might have trembled: but what horror can the light inspire?

First Shepherd. Light, do you call it? Surely this is nothing less than God's own glory, or the brightness, which we have so often heard, prevails in heaven. And hark! what is this clapping I hear round me?

Third Shepherd. Clapping?—

First Shepherd. Of innumerable wings? The air seems beat by multitudes of living creatures! Do you hear their pinions?

Second Shepherd. Clearly. What will be the end of this? And are they birds or angels?

Third Shepherd. Are they demons?

First Shepherd. Heaven defend us from their power! And yet, this glorious light seems not to speak them even birds, as you imagine, and much less then demons. Listen. Do I not hear singing?

Second

Second Shepherd. Yes, indeed. The air is musical.

Third Shepherd. The sound comes this way.

First Shepherd. It comes this way.

Second Shepherd. It comes every way. The voices are all round us. Is the place enchanted ? Let us listen, if the awfulness of such a scene will let us.

A Voice from one above unseen.

Fear nothing Shepherds ; for great joy
And happy news we bring ;
Since now, where David first drew breath,
To you is born a king.
Jesus, the Saviour of your race,
Commission'd from above
To visit earth, and bless mankind
With acts of heav'nly love.

First Shepherd. They are angels ; and we need not fear. But they begin again, though not so loud.

Second Shepherd. They are departing from us, though still near : And look, for certainly the light too is decreasing.

Third Shepherd. Peace, nor let a syllable of such enchanting melody be lost.

The

The Voice again.

To Bethlehem if you shape your way,

Lo this shall be a sign ;

That he you seek, is not of men,

But born of race divine :

Laid in a manger, shall the babe

On your approach be found.

Wrapp'd in mean swaddling clothes, and none

But beasts attending round.

First Shepherd. The sound has died away,
and every thing seems over.—No.—The song
begins again.

Second Shepherd. And louder.—Hark !

Several Voices in Chorus.

Glory to God in heaven above,

And on the earth sweet peace :

Good will tow'rds men, and love, whose reign

Henceforth shall never cease.

First Shepherd (after having gazed in silence).
Celestial harmony ! But every thing is over now
indeed.

Second Shepherd. Would it had still con-
tinued sounding in our ears !

Third Shepherd. What glorious music ! but
what still more gracious tidings in it ! You heard
every

every thing. *To us is born a king in Bethlehem.* Heavenly information ! But alas ! is not all this a vision ? Why continued not the voices ? and why thus goes out the brightness, that so lately shone upon us ? Every thing will soon be dark again.

Second Shepherd. What need have we to feast our eye-sight, when our souls have thus been ravished. The Messiah, for so long a time expected by our nation, is then come at length : But what ! Are we, poor Shepherds, to be made the heralds of such glorious tidings to our brethren, or has all the country seen and heard what we have ?

First Shepherd. If it has, no matter. Let us go to Bethlehem, and behold this wonder, which the Lord has thus made known to us, at least, as well as others.

Second Shepherd. I have had full time for thought : and am no longer now astonished at the voices we have heard ; for recollect what has been told us of the infant Zacharias' son ; that he should be forerunner to the prophet, which should speedily be born to save God's people from their sins. Who, therefore, is that prophet, but the child just now announced ?

Third Shepherd. Then too, at Bethlehem.
How

How every thing conspires to work on our belief, were we unwilling to give credit: for this order, which has lately issued from Augustus Cæsar, namely, that his tributaries should be taxed, obliges in particular our brethren to repair from every scattered province in Judea, to the city of their birth-place. Therefore, did that Mary, in whose person we all know the Saviour has been lately promised by an angel, not long since set out with Joseph for the place called Bethlehem, whither we are ordered to repair.

First Shepherd. But what! Is Joseph then a Bethlemite?

Second Shepherd. Assuredly; or wherefore would the angel have announced this promise of a Saviour to his wife? for, of the lineage of king David must the Saviour be, and David was a Bethlemite.

Third Shepherd. Nay, every thing is plain, if that be in reality the case. What once more then prevents our setting out for Bethlehem? We need no preparation, and besides, it is the will of God that we should go, and see this wonder he hath brought about. Come on then.

Second Shepherd. Be it so. The cold will quicken us in walking, and before the hour of sun-rise, we shall reach the place.

HOLY WRIT FAMILIARIZED
TO
JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS.

THE SEVENTH AGE OF THE WORLD.

ARTICLE CCCLXIX.

LUKE ii. ver. 21.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

BEFORE CHRIST 4.

SCENE. *The Temple.*

The PRIEST, JOSEPH, MARY, *with the Infant*
CHRIST; *his* SPONSOR, and ATTENDANTS.

JOSEPH.

THANKS be to God, that every thing commanded has been done : his name is Jesus. (*To the Priest*) Holy man, vouchsafe this offering at our hands ; a pair of turtle doves. We would have brought a lamb, but we are poor, and God has mercifully made a great distinction in his claims upon the various ranks of men. Accept then of the gift we bring, and bless us.

The Priest.

The Priest. God will bless you, and the offering you have brought him, prove no less acceptable upon his altar than a lamb, if richer people offered it, or even the whole herd of cattle on a thousand hills. Strange rumours are abroad ; of which, this infant is the subject. God knows every thing, and he alone can verify them. But however that shall prove, may you be happy parents, and this child afford you consolation in the several stages of this life. God's blessing wait upon you all.—(*He goes out*).

Joseph. Our thanks be with you for the wish ; and now, dear spouse, let us return to Bethlehem, till such time as you can travel back to Nazareth, where we will take up our abode again, if it please God : But who comes here ?

Mary. Our ancient friend, or I mistake, whose name is Simeon. Yes, I recollect him now.

Simeon (entering). Stay, friends. Where is this child ? I have been waiting for the hope of Israel now these many years ; and will the Lord at length vouchsafe me to behold it ?

Joseph. Oh, my good old friend ! Oh, Simeon !——

Simeon. Yes, he will vouchsafe me to behold it ; for the Holy Spirit, working in my spirit,

and assuring me I should not die till I had seen my country's consolation, has inspired me to come hither. And is this (*taking the infant in his arms*) that object?—Let thy servant then, O Lord, now, go in peace, since he has seen thy promise thus compleated, and that great salvation which thy mercy has prepared before all nations to illuminate the Gentiles, while thy people are exalted by it.

Joseph. Simeon, you have ever been a holy man, and therefore, are these transports you give proof of much more grateful to us.

Mary. And we take them, as a token of your friendship; having hopes that what you prophesy will be in time to come fulfilled.

Simeon. It will; and must be as I say: for I have trust in God, and speak with more than human confidence. Blest babe! that art ordained to prove the fall and rise again of many in the land of Israel, mayst thou bring down blessings on thy parents, in a future world at least; though, in this state of being, thou wilt prove in some sort a sharp sword, to pierce thy mother's heart with sorrow.

Mary. Say you, Simeon? but no matter. God, who is the author of my present comforts, cannot henceforth treat me otherwise than with the affection of a parent; since his very chastisements are blessings.

Simeon.

Simeon. Look, where Anna, Phanuel's daughter, comes. Full fourscore years and upwards has she led a life of prayer and fasting here within the Temple, and is making haste at present that her eyes may see this infant, and her soul return God thanks for that redemption he has thus begun miraculously to work out in Israel. —(*To Anna coming in*). Yes, dear prophets, draw nigh, and see the Saviour, for whose coming in the flesh among us, God has spared you to this lengthened time of life.

Anna. Oh father of thy people! Oh what joy for me, that thus beyond all expectation I am blessed! Auspicious Saviour of a people! let me clasp thee to my heart. Thus happy as I am, what are the natural mother's transports to my joys! They are so great I neither can contain, nor yet express them! Safe, blest child, mayst thou grow up to manhood, and hereafter, if one soul in Israel have a prayer he would prefer to God, be it that he may live to see thee every day wax strong in spirit, overflow with wisdom, and draw down the gifts of grace upon thy head.

Mary. Amen. So let us now depart to our abodes, where at our perfect leisure, we may meditate on these high things.

CCCLXX.

MATTHEW ii. ver. 1. to 8.

THE FEARS AND TREACHERY OF
HEROD.

BEFORE CHRIST 4.

SCENE. *An apartment in the Tetrarch's Palace
at Jerusalem.*

HEROD.

THE prophecies recorded by the Jewish
ancients, in that volume, whose contents
they say have been suggested by the God they
worship, are (it seems) about to be fulfilled, if
we believe the rumours circulated through Je-
rusalem, and all Judea; the inhabitants of which,
look every day to see that infant born, who is
to be their king. Their king! But of what
parents think they will he come? Of parents
hid at present in the very center of obscurity,
and so unknown, that fame has not yet pointed
out to my enquiries where they dwell.—Is it
then likely, that a child proceeding from such
parents should in time affect the rights of Cæ-
sar? Is it possible, Augustus should have cause
to fear what such a king in future may attempt?
And

And yet, who for a certainty can tell what is to be? These Jews, from the beginning, have evinced themselves a restless people, ever thirsting after empire, and no treatment but that rigorous one they have experienced from so many nations round about, could have repelled the mischievous effects of their ambition. It is therefore for the interest of our Cæsar, that the worst should be supposed, and ways suggested to prevent it. For *my* interest also it will be ; since, should this child be born within my province, the dominion here entrusted to me will be first attacked by those he may in future time bring over to his party. By his death then, must all danger, likely to ensue from his pretensions, be averted. By his death, if he is yet, or will be soon in being. And to bring about this necessary taking off respecting one, whose life may be so hostile to myself and Cæsar, I have made already every possible provision ; since, no sooner had these same wise men first reached Jerusalem, enquiring where the monarch of the Jews was to be born ; “ for we have seen,” said they, “ his star, and are come hither to “ adore him,” than perplexed and troubled I must own, and all Jerusalem too with me, I convened the Jewish priests, together with their scribes, demanding in what region of the land

their prophecies informed them Christ was to be born. To this my question, they replied: "In Bethlehem of Judea; for in this wise is it written," added they, "by one among our prophets. *And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not least among the chiefs of Judah; since from thee shall come a governor, to rule my people Israel.*" On this information do I frame my conduct; and have therefore ordered these wise men's attendance here, this morning. Possibly, they are already come, and I may set about the execution of my project, the success whereof must, after all, depend entirely upon my policy, much rather than my power.—(*Calling*) Without! who waits there? —(*To a Servant coming in*). Are those strangers come I spoke of?

The Servant. Yes, my lord, and waiting for admission.

Herod. Let them have it. I am ready to receive their visit. Send them in.—(*After the Servant is gone out*) They said, they were come hither to adore this infant. I must then pretend a like design, and turn the business of their visit to my own advantage. They are coming.—I behold them, and must now dissemble—
(*To the three Wise Men entering*). You are punctual to your time, and I applaud you for it.

it. You are zealous in the business that has drawn you thus far distant from your native country: But what wonder? Being all wise men, can you give greater testimony of your wisdom, than by thus repairing to the contemplation of a miracle, which is assuredly wrought out in favour of a persecuted people by the God they worship?

First Wise Man. We have heard indeed what grievous persecutions they have suffered; and this wonderful event accomplished in their favour, has induced us to set out, and come thus far.

Herod. And I have information for you, which, no doubt, will take away that apprehension you might reasonably entertain, of having undertaken such a journey to be disappointed. Need I tell you, that the nation of the Jews have, for a long time, been the sport of fortune: but the king you come in quest of, and whose birth there seems no room to question, will collect them once again together: And who knows but that this very city will revert into their hands, and be possessed, as formerly, without the acknowledgment of tribute to a power, that has no right, excepting that of conquest, to demand it. God, that now is giving them a king, can cause him to accomplish this here-

Q 5

after.

after. And in truth, it must be owned his power discredits that of our divinities.

Second Wise Man. It has indeed seemed often wonderful.

Herod. Go then, Wise Men, and satisfy yourselves; for, by your information of the time when you beheld this star, and what the Jewish priests and scribes have said upon the subject in their council, which I summoned at your instance, there appears sufficient room to think, as I have said already, that this king, while we are speaking here, is actually born: but in what place, excepting, as the Jewish Sanhedrim conceive by reference to their prophets' books, they cannot tell. Those prophets have all said, that Bethlehem is to be his place of birth. You tell me you have seen his star. Go then to Bethlehem, and search diligently for the infant. By good fortune you may find him; and, if so, send me intelligence, that I may likewise come and worship this great hope and expectation of a people.

Third Wise Man. Yes, we promise we will not keep back the intelligence which, to accomplish such a pious end, you wish for; but send word of our success, if we should be so happy as to prosper.

Herod. I rely upon your promise, with this
further

further intimation only, that the least delay on your part, after, by succeeding in your journey, you are able to dispatch me any tidings, would so long deprive me of my happiness in coming to fall down before this infant, who is certainly designed by heaven for the accomplishment of mighty things.

First Wise Man. This too, my lord, we promise; namely, that we will not, by the least delay, deprive you of the happiness your heart, no less than ours, is set on.

Herod. Go then, my good friends, and may that God, to contemplate whose wonderful working hand, you have been thus far travelling, point you out the way, and both in going thither, and returning thence, be with you.—
(*After the Wise Men are withdrawn*). They are gone, and till the time (at least) when they dispatch me news of their success, have I to think upon the prosecution of this business.

CCCLXXI.

MATTHEW ii. ver. 9, to 18.

THE MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

BEFORE CHRIST 4.

SCENE. *An open place without the town of Bethlehem.*

A BETHLEMITES MAN (*entering in dismay*).

OH miserable moment, when the childless, looking round about them, must bless God that they are so ; and when the prophet's exhortations prove sound doctrine ! “ Let the “ barren shout for joy : Let those, that never “ knew the tender title of a mother, sing “ aloud.” Let them at least do so in Bethlehem ; for what bloody tragedy is that now going on within her precincts. How escaped I ? Many would have thought themselves most happy to come with me hither, but a cruel soldiery were posted at the different outlets to prevent them. How then got I out ? I know not. All I can remember is, that having reached the out-street, near this quarter of the town, a woman, with an infant in her arms, was following me. She gave a shriek ; when, turning,

turning, I beheld three soldiers close behind her.—Soldiers did I say?—No, rather executioners; for, with a savage fury in their countenances, did they seize upon the infant, tear it from the mother's grasp, and dash it down upon the pavement. This did these inhuman ruffians, while, at no great distance from me, I could see distinctly others rushing to repeat their cruelty on other children, whom their mothers, in a fright, were bearing off, that they might shun so many daggers, all unsheathed against them. I was struck with horror; and that made me desperate to attempt the escape I have effected at the hazard of my life; for otherwise, how could I possibly have made my way through such a line of soldiers, as were posted round the walls, to keep us every one within them. God be praised however for delivering me. And now, that I have got away, let me compose myself; for here it is not likely any one will think of coming to attack or even interrupt me.—Waked at midnight, in this manner, by a band of soldiers, rushing into every house in quest of little ones to murder! What was I to think of such a carnage? In my first dismay, I could not recollect that these destroyers must have all been sent by Herod to perform so horrible a business.

We

We were previously apprized, how carefully God's providence had guarded that young child, who, some assert, was born by miracle to our late neighbours, Mary and her husband Joseph. Certain men called Magi, from the East came hither, while these neighbours were still living with us; and about the time of their returning from the Temple, whither they had carried up their little one to have him circumcised. The Magi, on arriving here, informed us they had seen his star, and the intention of their journey was to worship him.—Not knowing for a certainty however, where the little one was to be born, they visited Jerusalem, and made enquiry for him there. The cruel Herod heard of their arrival, and conceiving the abominable act of murder in his heart, pretended a desire of worshipping the infant too: and therefore, with an earnestness amounting to entreaty, bade them send him word when they had found the child. But God, while they were here, informed them, in a dream, what Herod really designed to do, and bade them not return, as they at first intended, to Jerusalem, or even send the atrocious monster any information. So that, after having worshipped this extraordinary infant, and presented him with gifts of gold, of frankincense, and myrrh, they

they quitted Bethlehem, returning to their native country by another way. And after their departure, Joseph and his wife gave out that God had sent his angel to inform *them* likewise, in a dream, of Herod's views upon their child, whom to preserve, they were commanded to arise, and flee into the land of Egypt, there to take up their abode till further intimation of his will. It was on this occasion they left Bethlehem.—But whom do I behold approaching me? A woman? She has had the same good fortune as myself; or rather she is one of those unhappy mothers who have lost their little ones, and who, because the soldiers have no further cruelties to perpetrate upon them, may go forth and wander whither they think proper. Yes, it must be so; for by the wringing of her hands, her hair in such disorder, and that beating on her breast as she comes forward, she can be no other than a common sufferer in the murders of the night. Unhappy woman! You have been awakened to begin your day with horror, and conclude it, very likely, in distraction. She is coming hither, though she knows not which way she should fly. Perhaps when she approaches, I may find I am acquainted with her. — Yes: oh heaven! oh heaven! My neighbour Rachel! Shall I shun her,

her, or stay where I am? But whither should I go? In any other part, I may encounter objects more in number; and besides, does not my neighbour stand in need of consolation? Let me tarry then, and hold out every comfort my poor means, but great good will, can give her. She is here.

A Bethlemite Woman (entering). Oh me, unhappy as I am! Oh heaven, have mercy on me! Whither shall I fly to hide me from my enemies; or rather, who will be my friend, and rushing forward with a dagger, send me to rejoin my innocents so barbarously taken from me?

The Man. Rachel!

The Woman. Who thus utters that word Rachel?

The Man. This way turn, and if the anguish you are suffering will permit you, recollect me.

The Woman. Ha!—Thank God, my griefs are not so great as I conceived them, since as yet they have not turned my brain, and I *do* recollect you.—Yes, and perfectly. You were my friend and neighbour while in Bethlehem I had any thing to make it valuable to me.

The Man. I can guess, alas, at your misfortune. You have lost your children.

The

The Woman. Both ! both murdered ; one while sleeping by me, and the other in my arms.

The Man. Poor children, and ill-fated mother ! Be composed however.

The Woman. Be composed, and have such cause for anguish ! Yet, methinks, I am composed. Yes ; wonderfully so : for notwithstanding every thing I suffer, I can recollect what happened in my childhood ; can remember I have read among the prophets' writings, that " in Rama there should be a voice of " lamentation, and great mourning, Rachel " weeping for her children, and refusing to be " comforted, since they are not." Yes, neighbour, I recall to mind all this, and you may see with how much ingenuity I can torment myself ; for I remember Bethlehem was once Rama. I am Rachel. I had children ; had, and they have both inhumanly been put to death. Who consequently bids me be composed, bids me belie the prophet. Therefore will I give my sorrows vent, and weep till my distress has reached the ear of Herod, who shall send his soldiers to revenge these midnight murders, perpetrated by some enemy whoever he may be, that thus, against all faith, has sent a band of executioners to murder his liege subjects in their beds.

The Man.

The Man. Alas! alas! You would then sue for vengeance to the wretch that has unsheathed his sword against you.

The Woman. How?

The Man. The murder of so many innocents as have been slaughtered since the sun last set, has been by order of that Herod; and your children have expired with others, that the son of Joseph might not live.

The Woman. What say you, neighbour?

The Man. This: and let it comfort you, that by the wicked Herod's order, has this massacre been wrought in Bethlehem. Joseph's child, you know, has more than once been stiled the intended monarch of the Jews; a title which this Herod feared would take away his title as the tetrarch, under Cæsar, of these provinces. And therefore, did he seek the infant's life. The Magi, who came hither to adore him, promised they would bring or send him information of the place, when they had found it, where he was: but they went home another way. The cruel Herod waited with impatience for the time of their return; till in the end, imagining they meant to mock him, he hath now sent forth his soldiers to destroy, without distinction, all the little ones in Bethlehem here, of two years old and under;
among

among whom, he thinks the obnoxious child must be: but some time past was that obnoxious child, in safety carried down to Egypt. This is the whole story. You have heard it, and since lamentation cannot do away affliction, I have hopes you will, in some fort, be consoled.

The Woman. I am indeed consoled; for notwithstanding both my children are beyond recovery lost, the idea is replete with joy, that for the sake of *that* great prophet, which should come into the world, they have been thus torn from it. Son of David, therefore, infant though thou art, behold me. I will weep no more for having lost my children; but cry out with David—*They are dead I know: why therefore should I weep? Can I by weeping bring them back? Oh no. But I shall go to them, though they must not return to me.*

The Man. This now is as it should be, and believe me I am happy, that my arguments have wrought this change within you. Lean upon my arm, and till the horror of the scene you have escaped from, is quite over, I will see if, in this quarter of the country, I have not a friend, who will receive you. Let me lead you hence.

The Woman. Do with me as you please, and heaven reward you for the kindness.—*(As they are*

are going out). Oh my children! Oh my God!
Oh bloody minded Herod!

CCCLXXII. CCCLXXIII.

LUKE ii. ver. 43.

CHRIST LOST BY HIS PARENTS,
AND RECOVERED.

* AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 8.

SCENE. *Before the Temple in Jerusalem.*

JOSEPH and MARY.

MARY.

DEAR husband, talk not to me thus. I am
a mother; and for three whole days to-
gether having lost my child, what must I think,
or how find words sufficient to express my
feelings?

Joseph. I have no design, dear spouse, to
argue down your feelings. I acknowledge you
have cause to be afflicted. All my aim is to
console you; for no doubt but we shall find
him here.

* In the interval of time between what was mentioned in
the preceding Article, and that we are to introduce in this,
viz. about three years after the murder of the innocents, begun
the first year of the common Christian Æra.

Mary.

Mary. But after three days' search among our kindred, what great cause have I to hope? Good God! why did I quit Jerusalem, without first seeing he was with us? But I thought him somewhere in our company. In fact, the child is twelve years old. Could I imagine he was liable to be enticed away, for so must we have lost him? I was not sufficiently upon my guard, though after having made four journies to Jerusalem, that he might see the worship of the place, and met with nothing like an accident, could I imagine our fifth journey would be followed by so melancholy an event? I was so little apprehensive of it, that you knew we had gone forward a whole day, without once thinking to enquire concerning him. And when I did enquire, what was the consequence? We are come back, and all the way on our return heard nothing of him.

Joseph. You have sought him, I confess: but in Jerusalem, where only he can be, you have as yet made no enquiry. We have only entered it indeed; and therefore cannot have made search where we are like to find him. Be of comfort, therefore. Every thing, I hope, will turn out well, and we shall not go home without him.

Mary. Could I hope as you do, I should then
be

be as indifferent : but you have not so much cause to be concerned as I have ; for not only have I lost my child, in which our situations are alike, and I am sure you are not at your ease in such a situation ; but alas ! to aggravate this loss on my part, I must add the upbraidings of my mind ; for granting any one among the Jews should have remarked him, and in consequence of what the prophecies have said, laid hands upon him.—I am seized with trembling at the thought ! I should have always had in mind what wonders the Almighty hath performed to save his life, and not have been so negligent myself. I should have recollected the appearance of his angel to command our going down to Egypt, that the murdering Herod might not take his life, as would have been the case, if we had staid in Bethlehem. Witness his infernal massacre of every child therein, soon after our departure ; and for which, he was so quickly called to his account by God. I should have recollected the Almighty's second visitation by his angel, bidding us return from Egypt, Herod being dead. I should have also recollected in what manner, on our journey thence, he gave us intimation, that instead of Herod, Archelaus, son of Herod, and a tyrant like his father, governed in Judea, when we turned aside
into

into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt again at Nazareth, where God, I should suppose, has fixed our habitation. Yes, I should have certainly remembered this, as well as every thing done for us, and not been so heedless of my charge. If he be lost, what will become of me!

Joseph. Once more, dear wife, be calm ; for I have every reason to consider him not lost : for as to your ideas that the child has been laid hold of, recollect how few now talk of the events that happened near his birth. Twelve years have passed away, and in that interval of time, our nation seems to have forgotten every circumstance that once was all the subject of their conversation. Possibly, God's providence has ordered every thing as it has come to pass, that our poor child might be preserved for the accomplishment of those great things he is reserved for. But be that as it may chance, you must discern, dear spouse, what little cause there is to fear he has been taken off. We must have hope, and seek him here, then in Jerusalem. This is the Temple ; and the hour of worship must be almost at an end. Let us begin then our enquiry here ; and afterwards, if we are not so happy as to find him, go through every quarter of the city regularly.—

Ha !

Ha! as I imagined! for behold the congregation have now finished their devotions, and are coming out. Here we will wait. And when the passage is a little clear, go in.

Mary. God grant we may discover him among the congregation at their coming out; for how shall I go up and down the city hunting for him in a place where I am utterly unknown?

Joseph. Here is a place, where we may stand, and let the people pass us.—(*They withdraw a little*).

Enter, as from the Temple, several of the congregation, two and two.

The First. What think you of him?

The Second. He must be a miracle!

The Third. So young, and yet so well instructed!

The Fourth. Did you notice how he puzzled all our doctors?

The Fifth. One would think he had the law by heart!

The Sixth. And then, how short his stature, which I measured as he happened to stand by, and found it only reached my elbow.—(*Pointing to that part*).

The Fifth. But where is he?

The Sixth. In the Temple: And no wonder, since

since the congregation crowd about him, so that if he would come out, he cannot.

The Seventh. Of what parents is he?

The Eighth. No one knows.

The Seventh. Nor whence he comes?

The Eighth. For my part, I was at too great a distance to enquire.

Mary (*while the people are still coming out*). Dear husband, did you notice that?

Joseph. That! What? As they passed by us? What the congregation said?

Mary. Yes, Joseph: They have seen a wonder in the Temple, and were talking of him: but particularly one among them struck me, who described the height of this same wonder, saying, that he came no higher than his elbow. You heard that, I fancy.

Joseph. Yes, I did so: and what then?

Mary. Ah, husband, if this wonder they are talking of should be our son! Their heights exactly are the same!

Joseph. If it should be indeed so: but be patient, till the congregation are all passed.

Mary. I must be patient till the way is open: but am full of hopes that we have found him.

Joseph. Hope not over confidently; so shall disappointment come with less vexation: for what likelihood that he, the congregation have

been talking of should be our son, since he has puzzled all their doctors. Let us wait, however, till the crowd grows thinner. And methinks, already, there is room enough to enter.—No.—Here comes a second crowd, and some one with them they are all employed to look at.

Enter several others of the congregation, and the child CHRIST JESUS in the middle.

Mary (seeing Christ, and rushing forward). It is he himself, and I have found him! I have found him!

First Bye-Stander. Found him? and is this your son?

Mary. Yes, yes, he is!

Joseph. Thank God, our search is at an end.

Second Bye-Stander. Thank God indeed; for you are parents of an amiable youth. He has been sitting in the Temple with our doctors, and not only listening while they spoke, but asking them such questions, that the congregation were astonished at his understanding.

First Bye-Stander. He has edified the people more than all their teachers, notwithstanding which, and though we would have made a passage for him to go out, yet he refused to stir till all the congregation had departed,

Christ. Could I have done otherwise? They
were

were so condescending, as to hear me patiently, and should I therefore quit the place before so many of my betters?

Second Bye-Stander. So much understanding in a child, and therewithal so much complacency! He is a man in both; and never was there sure a greater prodigy, except (though for a very different singularity) that other, whose strange way of living is in every person's mouth.

First Bye-Stander. You mean that John. He is indeed a prodigy, though not above the age I fancy of this child.

Christ. And pray, good friends, who is that John you speak of, and in what is he so singular?

Second Bye-Stander. In this, that at his tender time of life, he has of late renounced society, and taken to the desert, where he wanders up and down, subsisting upon locusts and wild honey, and with nothing to keep off the cold, except a coat of camels' hair, tied round about his middle with a leathern girdle. What a churlish disposition he must have! And more particularly at his age, to shun mankind, and wear no better cloathing.

Christ. He is poor, no doubt: but notwithstanding his apparel, he may have within him a good heart. My clothes, you see, are far

from being good : if therefore you should judge from them, my disposition, I should be but badly off : but I will study to fear God, as well as be obedient to my parents, and no matter then what clothes I wear. But tell me, has that John you have been speaking of, a father ?

First Bye-Stander. Yes, why ask you ?

Christ. For good reason. And a mother ?

First Bye-Stander. Both.

Christ. Ah, then I should not like to imitate him ; for I would not even change my parents, notwithstanding they are poor, to get the richest that might wish to own me. Much less, therefore, would I go into a wilderness, and live without them. I would work for their support, as long as I had strength to use my limbs.

Second Bye-Stander. Excellent child ! where do your parents live ?

Christ. At Nazareth, in Galilee ; and I live with them.

Second Bye-Stander. Do you ? Well, good youth, go home ; and God be with you.

Christ. And you too.

First Bye-Stander (to Joseph and Mary). We give you joy of such a son. He will be certainly a comfort to you in old age.—Farewell.

Christ

Christ. Dear parents, what has happened? You stand silent: are you ill?

Joseph. Speak to your mother, who will tell you every thing.

Christ. Well, mother; why do you appear so sad, and thoughtful?

Mary. Can you ask me, after having thus withdrawn yourself so long? Behold, these two days past your father and myself have sought you sorrowing.

Christ. Sought me sorrowing! Wherefore did you so, dear mother? Could you not but think yourself, I had to go about my Father's business?

Joseph. Go about his Father's business! What, dear Mary, are your thoughts on such an answer? But you seem astonished.

Mary. And I am so, husband. Go about his Father's business! (*Pausing*) Come, dear son, I will content myself with laying up these matters in my heart, and meditating on them daily.

Christ. But, dear mother, you seem angry with me?

Mary. No, indeed, my child, I am not angry with you; I am only miserable. I have been so, ever since the moment you were missing;

and must have some time allowed me to compose my spirits. But alas!—

Christ. Well, what alas, dear mother?

Mary. You have been you say about your Father's business. I submit, but grieve; for the necessity of such employment cannot but too often render me a weeping mother.

Christ. Say not so. I will do every thing I can to make you happy. Let us instantly set out for Nazareth, and you shall see how subject and submissive I will shew myself in future to you.

Joseph. Come, dear wife. You could not have been answered more affectionately.—Take your mother by the hand, my child. She is profoundly thoughtful. Lead her hence, and I will follow.

Christ. Come dear mother, and forgive me for this sorrow I have caused you. I will act in every thing as if I were your child; and, then, as I increase in stature, I shall grow in wisdom, and be loved by God and man.—

Mary. What shall I say?—I know not.—Oh my son! my son!

CCCLXXIV. CCCLXXV.

MATTHEW iii. MARK i. LUKE iii. JOHN i.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MISSION,
WITH HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN
THE WILDERNESS *. AND JESUS
CHRIST BAPTIZED BY HIM IN
JORDAN.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 27.

JOHN *in a coat of camels' hair*, SOLDIERS,
PUBLICANS, and OTHERS.

A SOLDIER.

THE council at Jerusalem must needs hear
of you, shortly; and their Priests and
Levites will undoubtedly come hither, to en-
quire by what authority you take this character
upon you. Why then not inform us now?

R 4

John.

* The sacred writings say but little of the Saviour, till his
entrance on the glorious work for which he came among man-
kind. Between his circumcision, and the matter mentioned in
the article preceding, and between that article and what is told
us in the present, when Christ Jesus had attained the age of
nearly thirty, not a syllable. Josephus says indeed, that six
years after his discovery in the Temple, Cæsar, called Augustus,
died,

John. No matter. Be it thought sufficient, I inform you, I am here on purpose to baptize and preach repentance, that the sons of Israel may become entitled to the kingdom, now approaching.

A Publican. But to this effect have all the prophets taught us. Have you any thing to say not mentioned in their books?

John. Yes, much; but principally this, that while the prophets all adjure you to obey their word, as you are children born to Abraham, I exhort you to forbear all boast of your great ancestor, as what will recommend you to God's favour; since his power, if he think proper, can raise children up to Abraham from these flints we tread on. You come hither to my baptism, Pharisees and Sadducees, but rather bring ye forth such fruits as indicate repentance; for in future will the axe go forth into the wood, and every tree that brings not forth good fruit, be felled and thrown into the fire.

One of the People. You speak as if invested

died, and was succeeded by Tiberius Cæsar. Near about which time, Josephus, or, as scripture calls him, Caiaphas, was made the Jews' high priest by favour of Valerius Gratus, procurator of Judea; which Valerius Gratus, twelve years after Caiaphas's first appointment, was succeeded in his place by Pontius Pilate, who, as well as Caiaphas, as we shall see, are often to be mentioned in the following articles.

with

with authority ; and you declare you come to preach repentance. Tell us, therefore, what we ought to do ?

John. The way is plain, and easy. Through the medium of mankind, lift up your hearts to God, and love your fellow-creatures, as the very ground-work of repentance ; for the law, in future to be published, is a law of mercy ; and while *that*, delivered on Mount Sinai, in the midst of thunders, authorized retaliation, and required the eye or tooth of him that had in either of those parts affected any other, *this*, which shall hereafter be promulged in love, exhorts you, saying thus : “ Do good to them “ that hate you, and pray heartily for such as “ persecute you.” He then, that is owner of two coats, let him partake them with his neighbour, having none : and he, to whom God’s providence has given sufficient food to eat, let him be no less charitable.

A Publican. This is an instruction meant for all : but we are of a class, which some imagine hurtful to society, and have no opportunities of exercising towards our neighbour so humane a precept ; for mankind in general hate a Publican. What therefore shall *we* do ?

John. Exact no more than what the laws appoint you ; and contribute not to make

the grievance of taxation more oppressive still through your extortions. Throw not up your places, but avoid injustice in them ; so shall men no longer hold the officer in scorn ; but while they see that Publicans are just and faithful, think him honourable.

A Soldier. Yes, such conduct will produce such consequences ; but good master, we are soldiers ; and if Publicans are scorned, we are detested as the enemies of liberty. What, then, have we to do ?

John. No more than what requires but little time in telling ; which is this : Do violence to no man, being satisfied with what the country pays you. And this precept, if you faithfully adhere thereto, will, of bad soldiers, render you good citizens ; and those you fight for shall not then complain, that through your insolence, a state of peace is often more intolerable than some warfares.

One of the People. Ha ! As we supposed. Look yonder, master, where a company of people are approaching. By their dress, they must be in authority, and from Jerusalem.—Yes, now they are drawn nearer, we can easily distinguish them for Priests and Levites.

John. Yes, they are no other. Give them passage. They are nigh at hand.

Enter

Enter several Priests and Levites.

First Priest. Which—which of you is he?

One of the People. This is the prophet.

First Priest. This! This he? Is this the man, on whom the hearts of such a multitude are musing in Jerusalem, and having heard of his abstemious course of life, imagine he may be that great chief prophet who should come? Alas! when we shall render an account of our proceeding to the Council that dispatched us hither, how will they condemn themselves for having thought that this recluse, more like a brute than human being, was the son of David.

John. Well.—Proceed, if you have more to say.

Second Priest. We thought, on seeing such a crowd of people from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region far and near on each side Jordan, as we met with in the way, all crowding to his baptism, and who served to mark us out our path,—yes, verily, we thought we should have seen at least a prophet: but this garb!—However, we must execute our errand, which is this; to know from your own lips, what character you come in, and by what authority you take upon you to baptize the people? Tell us, therefore, who you are?

John. First then, I answer, that whereas you

wonder to behold a savage, a recluse, more like a brute than human being, thus appear among you as that great chief prophet who should come, I take not to myself his glorious character.

First Levite. Are you Elias?

John. I am not.

Second Levite. Who then, that we may take some answer back to them that sent us?

John. I am this: the voice of one exclaiming in the wilderness: "Make straight the path way of the Lord," as said Esaias.

First Priest. Why then, let us know, do you baptize, if you are neither of these two?

John. For my part, I baptize with water to repentance: but the prophet coming after me, is mightier far than I can think myself, who am not worthy to stoop down, and loose the latchet of his shoes. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire. His fan is in his hand, and he shall fully purge his floor, to gather up the wheat into his garner, but consume the chaff with unextinguishable fire.

Second Priest. We have your answer, and depart. You are, it seems, then, the forerunner of that glorious prophet, promised in our law. When we shall tell this story in Jerusalem; annexing the description of this great forerunner's

forerunner's person ; namely, his uncouth rough coat of camels' hair, thus tied about his middle with a leathern belt, what will the chief priests say ?—(*The Priests and Levites go away*).

John. Let them depart in peace, and tell what sort of man they spoke with in the desert. They are disappointed people. So too will the Council be. The great chief prophet, looked for by the Jews, they think should have a very different forerunner.

One of the People. Ha ! here comes another company, good master.

John (appearing to be surprized). What means this ? Who is it I behold ? Oh friends, fix fast your eyes upon the foremost * personage ; for he it is, of whom I spoke just now, when I informed your Priests and Levites, that the prophet coming after me was mightier far than I could think myself.

Another of the People. What, holy man ; that gracious looking youth ?

A Third. Who has a purple garment on ?

* It appears that this arrival of the Son of God to be baptized by John in Jordan, was not till the latter had been three years occupied in the performance of his function. It was more convenient to connect them in this manner with each other, since the deviation is a matter of no consequence. The three years interval, thus lost, may be imagined to have passed between his baptism and temptation in the desert.

John.

John. The same. Yes, he, though coming after me, is, in reality, before me. And I knew him not, till now that God in secret whispers to my spirit, who he is; the Saviour, namely, which the prophets have beforehand told us should about this time be manifest to Israel; in assurance of which knowledge, I was likewise pre-admonished, that soon after his first coming to me, as at present, I should see the Holy Spirit coming from above, and for a time abiding on him. This, I tell you, friends, that when it comes to pass, you may remember what I told you, and not doubt the identity of this extraordinary personage; for should you, it would be a fruitless work in me to come baptizing you with water; and, in such case, would God's gracious purpose, in the means of that salvation he holds out, be lost.

Enter CHRIST and many with him.

John (continuing). Yes, friends: Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away men's sins! But, Son of Righteousness, say whence this honour paid to such a humble tenant of the wilderness, in deigning him this visitation?

Christ. Whence, but to evince myself obedient to the law of God, and be partaker of the benefits held out to all men, through your ministry?

J.hn.

John. My ministry? and come you then, to be baptized, and more than that, by me? Oh let it not be so; for I, upon the other hand, have need to be baptized of you.

Christ. You are a prophet, John; and know that the commands of God are not to be interpreted, but chearfully obeyed. Let, therefore, every thing be as he will; for thus is it incumbent on me to fulfil all righteousness.

John. A wonderful authority accompanies your words: they are addressed with all the gentleness of counsel, when each party is the other's equal, but produce within my heart the effect of absolute commands, delivered to a servant, infinitely lower than his master in degree; and I demur no longer, but with joy become the honoured instrument in such a glorious work. Lead on then to Bethabara, which is in sight, and I will follow as becomes my place. *(They both go out, and many with them).*

One of the People remaining (to the rest.) What think you of this matter?

Another. It is all a mystery.

A Third. Can this young man be he, that every prophet has informed us, was to come?

A Fourth. You heard the Baptist, just now, say he should be known by the Almighty's Spirit coming from above, and for a time abiding

abiding on him. Shall we follow to the spot, and see if such a miracle will really take place?

A Fifth. We are fatigued already, and shall hear it from the rest when they come back.

A Sixth. If it does really take place, shall we be able to suppose, but that the Almighty has a hand in the transactions of this day?

The First. Undoubtedly; for this descent of the Almighty's Spirit on him, will be such a matter, that no cunning or contrivance of mankind can be of use in bringing it about. It must be caused by God. But is Bethabara a great way off?

The Second. No farther than behind the mountain we descended, to come hither, which is scarce a furlong distance hence.

The First. No more! Then will the Baptist soon return again.

The Third. Assuredly he will; and this new comer with him likewise.

The Fourth. So at least I hope.

The Fifth. How young he seems! Sure he is hardly thirty?

The Sixth. But, good friends, how is it possible that this can be that Saviour, promised by the prophets? We have always thought he would appear among us as a king.

The

The First. We have so; and the Council likewise at Jerusalem.

The Second. What then will they imagine, when acquainted with the character in which he has appeared?

The Third. They will be scandalized no doubt; and never own him. — Hark! what voice was that?

The First. That! what?

The Third. Methought I heard a voice say something.

The First. Something!

The Third. Yes, and from above.

The First. Heard something from above! What mean you?

The Fourth. I heard nothing, but the wind, if that—

The Fifth. Nor I.

The Sixth. Nor any one, I fancy.

The Third. I am sure, I could not be deceived.

The First. What likelihood of such a thing?

The Third. Nay, trust me, I am confident I heard a voice. It was almost articulate, though at so great a distance.

The Fourth. Ha! here comes the Baptist.

The Fifth. But alone.

The Sixth. What has he done with his companion?

The

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The Fifth. We shall know that soon.

The Sixth. Now, trust me, I am sorry we have lost him.

Re-enter JOHN with others.

John. Brethren, wherefore came you not to Jordan, with us? You would both have seen and heard, in that case, miracles.

One of those who went out with John. Yes, miracles.

The Third who remained. So I imagine. I, for my part, being here, heard something, though the rest deny it.

John. Did you hear a voice from heaven?

The Third. I heard a voice; and as I thought, above me.

John. You thought properly: It was above you.

Another who remained. But the stranger—

John. Listen, my good friends, while I inform you, on the credit of these witnesses, who saw the whole transaction, what has happened. This divine one, after having gone into the water, was returning, when behold God's Spirit, in the likeness of a dove, descended from on high and lighted on him, while a voice too, issuing out of heaven was heard as follows: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The

The Third who remained. Yes, that I heard myself, though not so clearly as to note the words. I told you so, good friends; but was not credited.

Another that remained. Well be it so: what followed this?

John. Astonishment and awe upon our part. We knew not what to say; and while we stood like statues, gazing on the object of our wonder, he withdrew, and soon will the Almighty's Spirit hurry him into the wilderness, that he may enter on the glorious office he is come for, by affording proof of his submission to God's will and pleasure in such situations of this life, as were it lawful for me to declare them, you would own most suited to approve the strength of human resignation. For the present, therefore, let us separate, good friends; I staying here, where Providence has fixed my habitation for a time; and you returning home, where you may ponder on these matters that have come to pass already, and prepare your hearts for such as shall ensue in future. Go then, go, good friends; and may God's blessings be upon you.

One of the People. Do not drive us hence, when we desire to stay and pass our lives hereafter with you.

John. That you may not, neither must I
suffer

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suffer it. Go, therefore, once again, and think not that God's service can be carried on in such a way as he approves of at so great a distance from society. You are to mingle with the world, and benefit mankind, at least, by your example, if you wish to be God's servants. Go; and, once more, may his providence be with you.

CCCLXXVI.

MATTHEW iv. MARK i. LUKE iv.

CHRIST'S FIRST TEMPTATION IN
THE WILDERNESS.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

The TEMPTER (personating a way-faring Man).

YONDER, I behold him. He has reached the border of the precipice, looks over, and turns back. His path lies this way, and I cannot fail of what I wish for; a full opportunity of speaking with him, if I tarry here a little. Let me, in the mean time, think.—Who is he? An extraordinary man and nothing else? Or one descended from above? If he should be this last, those practices I meditate,

ditate, will fail of their effect; and I shall then return to my associates, in the bottomless abyfs, to which the Almighty's power, in the beginning, doomed us. Yes, I shall go back an unsuccessful agent. This, however, I shall know, even granting I return without succeeding, whether he is human or immortal, which to know, will certainly be something. If immortal, we are only what we were before, and must submit in our condition: but if human, I may work upon him, as I did, in former ages, upon Eve, to sin against his God, and so prevent those great atchievements he is destined to accomplish; for undoubtedly he must be an extraordinary man to have consoled forty days and nights with none but brutes, and destitute of food, excepting the wild produce of this solitude. Poor food, as must be owned, for human beings to partake of, and for such a length of time! He is come nigher now, and I can see him much more clearly than before. With what a trembling pace he walks, as if each step he took would be his last! He is in want of food. No wonder, having roamed here up and down so long. Let me speak lower, lest he overhear me, and so stand upon his guard against my schemes. But surely he is talking to himself. What then if I should
hile

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hide in some thick covert hereabout? This place will serve my turn; for I shall hence hear every thing he says, at least while he is passing, which will take him up some time, with that deliberate pace he moves. Perchance, from that I may discover something I should like to know. If not, it will be only so much labour lost; and I can shew myself whenever I think fit. But he is almost here. Let me make haste then, and withdraw before it be too late.
—(*He withdraws among the trees*).

Christ (entering). Is there no friend at hand, who, with a little food, will satisfy my famished soul? Oh heavenly father! look upon me, and dispatch an angel to support my sinking frame; for I can entertain no hopes of being aided in this wilderness by any one of human kind. Here am I, the companion of wild beasts, but much worse off than they; for every bush administers their meal, while I am perishing for want. Alas! alas! let me, however, if the weakness of my frame, contending as it were with death, will give me leave, refrain from all complaint; for is it not God's pleasure I should be in so distressful a condition? Yes, remember *that*, my soul; and let the idea furnish me with strength of body to endure the worst. By the Almighty's grace, I will do so;
and

and yonder, I believe, I see a turf, where I will rest me if I can.—(*During this speech, he passes by the place where Satan has concealed himself, who now comes forth*).

The Tempter. Ho there! Whoever you may be! Return; or stay till I can come up with you.

Christ. What unlooked for voice is that? Am I, or am I not, deceived?

The Tempter. Return: fear nothing. You are not deceived. It is a voice you heard, and as perhaps with pleasure you will find, a friend's.

Christ. A friend's! Can I have been so happy as to meet with any human being in this wilderness, and more particularly with a friend?

The Tempter. Yes, you have met with *me* that am a human being, and will be your friend, if I can serve you. Chance has brought me through this quarter of the desert in my passage to a town some distance off; and I rejoice thereat, since it may put it in my power to aid a traveller, like myself, who, in addition to some other misery, is, no doubt, bewildered, and has lost his way. To point you out the path, is what I mean to do: but there are other aids, of which you stand in need, and to be done immediately. Inform me, therefore,
of

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of what aid at present you stand most in need ; and yet, although you should keep silence, I could easily divine what sort of misery oppresses you ; for, as your faltering tone of voice, and tottering gait in walking, tell me, you want food.

Christ. Oh truly guessed at ! or, as doubtless I should rather say in my unhappy situation, truly gathered from my looks ! I have not tasted food——

The Tempter. No more. Let me prevent your information, and evince myself no common man : so will you have much greater reason to thank God for sending me to your assistance in the hour of jeopardy, which otherwise you could not have survived.

Christ (aside). What does this stranger mean ?

The Tempter. You have not tasted food these forty days and nights. *That* I distinguish clearly. Weigh this matter therefore well, and then conjecture what, in point of knowledge I must be.

Christ. Oh friend !

The Tempter. And yet, suppose not I have gained this information from yourself. You may have been revolving your unhappy situation in such accents, as afflicted people commonly give vent to, which as easily I might have overheard,

heard, while I lay here concealed ; since, in reality, I did so ; but by no means as a spy, to overhear what you might say ; for being single in this wilderness, I was afraid of danger to my person, when I saw you, and retreated to the covert you just passed. Believe what I have told you of, in these few words.

Christ. I do believe you, my good friend.

The Tempter. Hear, therefore, what still further I can mention of your life, and then believe me more implicitly. Strange prophecies were uttered in relation to your birth. You are derived of poor, but honest parentage ; and people call you David's son. At twelve years old, your mother brought you to Jerusalem, where you remained behind on her return, and not long since you were baptized in Jordan by that John, of whom our countrymen (for I too am a Jew as you are) talk so much.

Christ. What do I hear ! the account of my whole life ! Sure heaven has sent its angel to relieve me ; and I shall not die of hunger.

The Tempter. They will likewise have it, that as well as being sprung of David's line, you are the Son of God. And this assurance, which I know is in so many people's mouths, suggests to my idea one sure way by which you may supply your wants. I cannot, from my scanty

stock of food, administer thereto ; for I have barely just as much as will suffice my own necessity till I get home, and were it halved between us, it would scarce be a mouthful each ; whereas, I have to point out a resource much better, as will instantly appear ; for if you are the Son of God, convert these stones we tread on into bread.

Christ. How, friend ?

The Tempter. Convert, I say, this stone, for instance (*taking up one*), into bread.

Christ. Convert it into bread ! and why ?

The Tempter. And why ? Methought you talked just now of being famished : take it therefore, and supply your want.

Christ. Away ! Is this your friendship then ? and have I trusted upon one for aid, who has no other means of helping me, than by such counsel, which would teach me, if I followed it, to break the law of God.

The Tempter. How say you ? break the law of God !

Christ. Yes, break it, for what else is written in that law than this : “ Man shall not live “ by bread alone, but every word proceeding “ from God’s mouth.”

The Tempter. If you refuse my friendly counsel, either must your hunger be dissembled, or you cannot be the Son of God.

Christ.

Christ. No matter, friend, whose son I am. My want of food is far from being, as you say, dissembled; but I will not, by forbidden means, procure myself relief.

The Tempter. But are you serious? Yes, you are so. I can see it in your looks. What strange perversity! as if, whoever you may be, God should take pleasure in beholding any of his creatures suffer pain.

Christ. God takes not pleasure in the pain of those he has created: but is pained himself, when he beholds them fly for consolation to such methods for relief, as are forbidden in his law. You cannot but see clearly what intolerable hunger I endure, while speaking to you: but I honour God, if I sustain it with a heart of resignation to his will. There are unnumbered evils that embitter human life; and were I overwhelmed beneath them all at once, more glory would result to God from my submission to the hand that scourged me, than from every blessing poured upon my head, should I obtain them by offending his commands.

The Tempter. If these are really your notions, mine are the reverse. I cannot be of service to you, and will therefore go my ways.

Christ. That labour I will spare you, and be gone myself. The sooner I am rid of such

a friend, the better for me. Your advice deserves not a farewell. Farewell, however; and may God be more hereafter in your thoughts, than hitherto he has been.—(*He goes out*).

The Tempter. He is gone; and my first scheme has failed: I have not wrought upon him to transgress the will of God, by intimating how he might supply his lack of food. He is, at least, what human beings call a holy man, or certainly he would have never called in question the propriety of my advice respecting those sure means that might supply his wants. That he could so remove those wants, is doubtful. Were that certain, I would cease from further trial, conscious, that if really he were the Son of God, all my designs would come to nought. But in the doubt, I will go on, and more particularly so, as there are other methods left me still, by which I may assail his virtue. He is not yet out of sight, but getting from me with what speed his fainting frame will let him. I will therefore follow; and already having failed in urging him to break the law of his Creator by the terror of that evil *hunger*, change my method of proceeding, and allure him by the prospect of good things, if he will yield to do as I advise him. I have every argument in readiness, and easily can overtake him.

CCCLXXVII.

MATTHEW IV. MARK I. LUKE IV.

CHRIST'S SECOND TEMPTATION.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

SCENE *changes to a part not very distant from the former.*

CHRIST (*alone*).

I SEE him coming after me, What does he mean to do? Undoubtedly it is my Father's will, that by the importunity of such a wicked, though old man, the pangs of hunger, agitating my whole frame, should be encreased. But be it so, I bow myself to his decree, nor will repine at any thing he may ordain. And yet, there was a time when I was different from my present situation. All the prophecies foretold me as the Saviour of mankind, and till the moment I was driven hither by the Spirit, I exulted in the thought; while now, I know not how it comes to pass, but I have ceased to be myself. I acted among men, as if I were a man, but thought within my bosom like a God: whereas, alas! at present, I am much

more ignorant than man, and know not if this troublesome intruder on my solitude be really the character he seems, or not. My spirit is dejected, and even fears him. Hard condition! Yet, O God, vouchsafe me strength and patience in this trial thou ordainest. It is the trial of my virtue, and a lesson meant for the instruction of all human beings. He is here.

The Tempter (coming in). Forgive me, if again I venture to intrude. There is about you something that I love; and therefore, I must shew myself importunate, or disappoint my wish, which is to do you good.

Christ. What more have you to say?

The Tempter. I know you are distressed for food, and it distresses me too, that my counsel does not suit your notions, which are far too scrupulous. They are, however, what they are; and therefore I will not repeat my arguments advanced already, though to do you good. No, trust me, I will never counsel you again to disobey what you may think God's will, although it be a consequence ensuing from such disobedience, that a grievous evil will be shunned.

Christ. Now, friend, you make amends; and I will hear you patiently. I am not one of those who scorn good offices designed them: let me,

me, therefore, know by what you would evince that love, with which you say you view me; and provided it involves not the infraction of God's laws, as they have been delivered to his people in the desert, you shall see how I will shew my gratitude.

The Tempter. I like this declaration: and will always be hereafter your fast friend, because I have compassion on you.—I have told you, or at least I meant to do so, that whatever my disguise may be, you will discern I am no common man; in proof of which (*waving his staff*) look round, and let me know what you behold.

Christ. Oh what a * miracle! and in an instant brought about! I see extended countries, and their glory placed before me! Who has brought them here? Now, trust me, I am mainly ignorant of every thing. To whom am I indebted for so fair a prospect.

The Tempter. Whom can you be possibly indebted to for such a prospect, but myself? Be comforted. Relief is now at hand, for all these things you see extended round about you, no-

* We must take it for granted, that the Tempter, by his power, excited an imaginary prospect to deceive the Son of God; for never was there any mountain in the world, from whence the eye could see a hundredth part of the terraqueous globe.

thing of less value than the kingdoms of the world all put together, will I give you, if for such a noble gift, you will fall down and worship me, as you would do your master.

Christ. How! fall down and worship you! Once more, I ask, is this your friendship then, and this the way you were to take, that I might satisfy my wants, and yet not sin against the will of God?

The Tempter. How will you sin against the will of God by following my advice?

Christ. Fall down and worship you, as if you knew not it is written: "Thou shalt worship God, and serve him only!"

The Tempter. Are you so ingenious as to wrest these sayings to your own perdition? I am come in perfect kindness, but you scorn my bountiful intention, and are steadfastly resolved to be at variance with yourself. Yes, foolish youth, although your years entitle you by no means to the boast of wisdom, you would fain set up for wife. What follows then, but that you must be your own enemy, while I would shew myself your friend.

Christ. My friend! Mistaking man! I need not such a compound of old age and sins together to befriend my youth, however inexperienced it may be. I put my trust in God, and know that he will be my friend.

The

The Tempter. So then you scorn both my good counsel and good gifts?

Christ. I do, and turn my back upon you. I will go *this* way, while you take *that*: so shall we be the sooner distant from each other. Hence! I will not waste another word on such a person, but much rather groan out my distresses to the woods.—Away! away!—(*He goes out*).

The Tempter. It seems then I am foiled again. I cannot prosper in my schemes, nor yet discover any thing. Is he the Son of God? I do not find he is, from what has passed between us. On the other hand, he has repelled my machinations with such weapons only, as mankind may always use. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but every word proceeding from God’s mouth.” Such was his answer to my first attempt; and to my last, “As if I knew not it was written *thou shalt worship God, and serve him only.*” These replies are from that book, in which the Jewish prophets have delivered what they call God’s law; and not the simplest rustic, that yet ever kept a flock of sheep, but might have answered me therefrom. Is this then any proof of his divinity? Had he commanded fire from heaven when I gave proof of my design upon him, *that*

would have been something ; but to meet me upon equal terms, just as one man would meet another, what am I to judge of the whole matter? I am utterly bewildered, and will think no longer of it. I am disappointed, and thus disappointed will return to those that sent me, candidly confessing that the task, on which they put me, was so difficult, I could not compass it. But will they credit me? And is there not even yet some room for hope, if in another manner I renew the attempt?—Let me reflect a little. If,—or stay, where is he? I observe him. Aptly thought of!—I have still some prospect of succeeding; for the situation of the place he is at present come to, as from hence I can discern, supplies me with the means of trying what a third temptation may effect; and I will set about it instantly, lest he should shift his ground, and so I lose the advantage of it. Let me not employ a moment, therefore, of such precious time in any other business.

CCCLXXVIII.

MATTHEW iv. MARK i. LUKE iv.

CHRIST'S LAST TEMPTATION.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

SCENE changes to a precipice.

CHRIST *sitting faint and feeble, near the margin,*
and the TEMPTER, *at a distance, but ap-*
proaching.

The TEMPTER.

THE precipice he is arrived at has prevented his proceeding further, therefore has he set himself down by the edge, quite spent, as any one may notice, with fatigue and famine. From his present situation therefore do I augur my success in this last trial; and at least I shall be able to discover whether he is human or immortal, if not, work upon him, so as to seduce his virtue. But he sees me, and is rising.

Christ (getting up). Heaven defend me! He appears again, and all my apprehensions are returning!

The Tempter. Stranger, pardon me, if hitherto my conduct has appeared suspicious. I confess, you have some cause, at least, to doubt me; but assure yourself, that for no other rea-

for have I been officious, than because I wished to mitigate your sufferings. Yes, believe me, I have been unfortunate, not criminal, in my advice and promise : but I did not think, that from a fear of violating that strict duty you owe God, you would have been prevented from abiding by the first, or joyfully accepting at my hand the latter : though, at length, I am convinced that your refusal to do either could not but have been expected from a man of so much holiness as you have given me proof of. Interrupt me not, I earnestly conjure you ; for my wish, at present, is to make some compensation for the wrong I have, though unintentionally, done your virtue. And I mean to make this compensation, by suggesting what sure means have recently occurred to my reflection of supplying your necessities, which means are such, that neither God nor man will be displeased at your resorting to them.

Christ. After every previous protestation, does this last deserve the least degree of credit ?

The Tempter. Think not of the past, but take advantage of the present ; for the advice I am about to give you merits confidence. We had no sooner parted from each other, than reflecting with concern upon my efforts to assist you, all made fruitless, I bethought myself, that

that in a certain quarter of this wilderness there is a friendly spot of ground, on which the choicest fruit trees grow, collected all together: but what hand could first have planted them in such a place, I cannot tell you. It should seem they were intended by the will of Providence to solace those, whom accident or their ill fortune brings into this desert, and who otherwise would perish. Go then, and enjoy the blessed aid which my remembrance has thus happily enabled me to point you out.

Christ. The choicest fruit trees, did you say? But where?

The Tempter. Here.—Stand where I do, and direct your eye towards yonder cloud, the largest in the heaven. Do you observe that great black cloud?

Christ. I do.

The Tempter. Well then, as one may say, below it, in the vale, are to be found those fruit trees. Yes; for look attentively, and you will see the very fruits themselves, as I do, through the leaves, although at such a distance off.

Christ. Oh! what a misery, and disappointment! I see nothing of all this.

The Tempter. See nothing of it! Your weak state of body must have certainly affected then your eye-sight?

Christ.

Christ. Truly may it be so: but supposing I could see this meal by Providence prepared me in the wilderness, here is a cliff before me, running through the forest, and to leap it would be certain death.

The Tempter. Will you continue starting fresh objections to my wish for your advantage? What suggests them, but the thought of that obedience you owe God? For this, you merit praise, I must acknowledge; and no doubt but God is pleased with such obedience paid him: but, in this expedient I advise, you have your privilege, and not to use it, in the present instance, would be little short of homicide, since it would be a criminal consent to die beneath the pressure of that hunger, which so easily may be removed. Leap then, without delay or hesitation, and fear nothing. You will not experience that destruction, which so many others, who rank lower than yourself in virtue, would too surely undergo; for what says David, speaking to a holy man? "No evil shall
"befal thee," are his words; "for God shall
"give his angels charge to keep thee safe, and
"in their very hands shall they support thy
"steps in travelling, lest at any time thou dash
"thy foot against a stone."

Christ. Why do I waste the little strength
still

still left me, in disputing with so foul a man of sin? Abominable hypocrite! thus citing scripture to conceal the vilest purpose, no less vile than that of proving, men may, at their pleasure, try God's providence; for since you quote God's word in such a manner, say, if, in that word, it be not written too: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Hence Satan!—Satan let me call you; for such grievous wickedness deserves the appellation. Hence! if you have any fear of God, though you despise and trifle with my misery. In God's name, be gone, and leave me. (*At these words, the Tempter leaps the precipice, and disappears upon the other side below*).—What means this? Have I been talking then with Satan all this while? Who else could have withdrawn in such a manner; for I see him in the valley at a distance, though no longer fashioned as he was just now; but like a flame of fire.—Oh Father! I return thee thanks, that by thy grace I have escaped this danger. I have combated with Satan, as one man would fight against another, and have foiled him with the weapons men may use themselves on all occasions; with instructions taken from thy word, and with the confidence of faith in thee. This threefold trial therefore of my duty and obedience, shall afford an admirable lesson for mankind, when they

they are tempted. Blessed be thy providence, O God, for all things, and particularly this great instance of thy love for man. I die well pleased in being made the instrument of such beneficence to those I came that I might save. Yes, Father ; from thy heavenly dwelling-place look down, and let me, by some token, be assured that thou takest pleasure in me. It will sweeten this unpalatable cup of death I have to drink ; for surely the fierce pangs of hunger that so long have been tormenting my whole frame, are now at length all over, and the moment of my death is come. Receive me then, thou earth, and, with my final breath, let me acknowledge the Almighty's goodness that reserved me for this conquest. There was nothing more than such a triumph wanting e'er I died, to render my departure glorious ; and, in some sort, as a messenger, just ready to set out by order of his sovereign, waits for some last message of importance to his errand, so too did my soul delay to quit its dwelling, till the word of conquest sounded in my ear, and now even now, yea at this moment, is it hastening to depart. This is my grave place ; and oh, welcome, welcome, —

(Soft music in the air).

(After a pause) — Has my spirit then took flight already ? and is this celestial music meant

to

to usher me along, on my arrival in another state of being?—No, I feel I am still living, and feel too fresh strength and spirits flowing in upon me. Nor does now the rage of hunger agonize me any longer. I am changed in every member of my frame, like one just risen from a bed of grateful sleep.—But hark! do I not hear more music?—

Voices above unseen.

Servant of God, and Son,
Strong in thy Father's might,
The three-fold battle thou hast won,
And put the foe to flight:

Rise then, and look around;
For, to refresh thee now,
Fruits of all flavour shall be found
Depending from the bough.

Go forth, pluck, eat, be strong;
And may the vital flame,
Ev'n e'er thou rise to rush along,
Renew thy fainting frame.

Where barrenness late frown'd,
An Eden now appears;
Thus are good men with blessings crown'd!
Thus God dispels their fears!

Built

Built on obedience, stands

The virtue thou hast shewn:

Go then, and in remotest lands,

Be that obedience known.

Preacher of righteousness

Go forth, and shew mankind

That they who when life's ills oppress,

Or hope elates their mind,

Refuse their state to mend

Against God's holy will,

And ne'er his providence offend

By rushing into ill,

Safe thro' his love shall, soon or late,

Find a sure refuge in their grievous state.

Christ. Sing on, ye heavenly host!—But they have ended, and are now returned to God who sent them, to that God who has relieved me, and dispelled all my anxieties.—(*Rising*). Oh comfortable sound! *Fruits of all flavour.* I behold them at this distance, and no fancied fight, like what the Tempter bade me look at, but all real. Let me therefore haste, and, though my hunger is in part subdued, partake of this delightful meal. God's providence be praised for all things. Oh it hardly needed he should send his angels to direct my going forth, and

and preaching to mankind the succour I have now experienced, in reward for what he deigns to look on as a virtue at my hands; for, in the volume of his book, is it recorded of me: "I should come to do his will." O God, I am content to do it, for in truth, thy law is in my heart.

CCCLXXIX. CCCLXXX.

JOHN i. ii.

THE CALLING OF ANDREW, &c.
AND THE WATER TURNED TO
WINE.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

SCENE. *A room.*MARY *and a FRIEND.**The FRIEND.*

YOU tell me wonders! Forty days and nights?

Mary. No less, good friend; and those not ended more than six weeks since, when he returned. For my part, ever since he tarried in Jerusalem, and on my chiding him for what

I thought

I thought a want of filial feeling, answered, “Wherefore did you seek me, mother? Could you not bethink yourself I had to go about my Father’s business.”—Ever since that answer, I repeat, have I been pondering on it in my heart, and left him to pursue the path God’s providence, and not his own ideas (I dare trust), has marked him out.

The Friend. He is, no doubt, reserved for the accomplishment of mighty things, to which this late appointment of those four he has associated to himself, as followers, or disciples, we may naturally think will lead. But can you tell me any thing respecting their vocation? any one of the accompanying circumstances? If you can, oblige me, my good friend; for I have some few minutes on my hands before the feast is ended. I have left the table, and my charming bride, to tell you of our wanting wine, in hopes you will prevail upon this wonderful man, your son, to work a miracle in our behalf, that the expected pleasure of the feast may not stand still. In what then, can I spend those minutes better, than in giving ear to any narrative, respecting such a singular, or rather holy man.

Mary. This narrative, which I rejoice I can, in all its circumstances, give you, is as follows:

lows: After his return from being tempted in the wilderness, it seems the Baptist accidentally was standing no great way from Jordan, and conversing earnestly with one of his disciples; when my son passed by. Nor sooner did the Baptist see him, than he said to that disciple, Andrew, he that, as you recollect, came last this morning to the feast, and whom you welcomed,—

The Friend. Yes, I recollect him.

Mary. Certainly you do. Well then, as I was saying, John no sooner saw my son pass by him, than he said: "Behold the Lamb of God!" which, Andrew hearing, followed him. He, turning round, observed him, and enquiring what he wanted, the disciple asked him where he dwelt, to which, my son made answer: "Come and see." He did so, and abode that whole day with him. On the morrow, Andrew went to seek his brother Simon, who with Philip and Nathaniel, too, of whom I shall speak shortly, is here likewise. Andrew had no sooner found his brother, than he told him the Messiah was at length revealed, and come among mankind.

The Friend. And brought him, I suppose, to Jesus?

Mary. Yes, he did so; who, beholding him, began,

gan, without receiving any intimation first of all from Andrew, saying: "You are Simon, and your father's name is Simon: but henceforward men shall call you Cephas, that is Peter, or a stone." Next day, he wished to visit Galilee. He did so, and *there*, met with Philip, who is Andrew and his brother's fellow-townsmen: And observing something in him, as he said, entitled to esteem and friendship, made him his disciple likewise.

The Friend. And Nathaniel?

Mary. He was Philip's friend, who meeting with him, said: "Would you believe it, neighbour? We have found, at length, that prophet, whom, of old time, Moses, and so many prophets in succession, promised, Jesus born in Nazareth, and son of Joseph."—"How! in Nazareth! Can any good come out of Nazareth?" replied Nathaniel. "Come, and satisfy yourself," said Philip. So he did; when lo! my son no sooner cast his eye upon Nathaniel drawing near, than he began as follows, being well acquainted with his character: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom no guile is to be found." Nathaniel stood astonished, asking by what means he knew him, and was answered: "Verily, before your friend and neighbour told you of me, I beheld you standing by a certain fig-tree.

The Friend.

The Friend. Did he recollect this token?

Mary. Yes, and answered: "Rabbi, you are, in reality, the Son of God. You are, indeed, the king of Israel." Jesus, struck with such an overflowing faith, replied: "Can you believe so instantaneously, because I said I saw you by a fig-tree? You shall quickly see still greater things. Yea verily, hereafter you shall see heaven opened, and God's angels both ascending and descending on the Son of Man." This is the story of these four disciples, whom together with their Master and myself, you have invited hither. Judge then, if he must not be considered an extraordinary man, and whether, when I tell him you have no more wine remaining for the feast, it is unlikely he should have the power of making any.

The Friend. Doubtless, he possesses such a power, if only he thinks proper to exert it.

Mary. At what table is he?

The Friend. At the fourth, close by the door; and his disciples with him. What if I request he would come hither to you?

Mary. Do: and I will urge him to befriend the company on this occasion. Have you noticed whether he appears to be a sharer in the general pleasure of the dinner. If he do, that circumstance

circumstance may give us hopes that our request will not be left ungranted.

The Friend. You are in the right; and we may entertain such hopes: for never did I see a countenance more chearful during the whole meal than his, or those indeed of his disciples. We may say religion well becomes it. His behaviour has been such, that we might think, as elsewhere I have heard it said, God made the good things of this world for the enjoyment of the virtuous, and theirs only.

Mary. You rejoice me. Send him therefore hither. I will take the opportunity of sounding him upon the subject; and as soon as he has left the table, let the servants bring me half a dozen of your water-pots, that they may be an intimation of your want.

The Friend. I understand you, and will see them sent you.—

Mary (after the Friend is gone out). Good! He will not surely be displeased if I supply him with an opportunity of manifesting his superior power. What end can possibly be worthier such a meeting as the present: but the governor, my friend, has not delayed the matter, for I see him coming. Yes, and with his four disciples.—(To her Son here entering, with his four disciples). I have thought it needful

to

to disturb you at this feast; to which we have been both invited, and whose entertainment, I rejoice to find you take so great a share in.

Christ. Can you blame me? Marriage is an honourable state, dear mother, and was sanctified in paradise by God himself: but wherefore have you sent out for me thus? The bridegroom but just now drew near my seat, and whispered there was something you desired to mention.

Mary. Yes, there is, dear son; and *that* as follows: that the pleasures of the feast will soon be over, if you interfere not to prevent it, since the wine, of which so many have partaken, is all out.

Christ. All out, dear mother! But why tell me this?

Mary. Because, dear son, you have it in your power to keep the mirthful humour of the company from flagging.

Christ. I? And how, good mother, can I shew myself so far their friend?

Mary. By using that superior power you are possessed of, in producing them a new supply of wine.—And look! here come the water-pots.—(*To the Servants coming in with six flaggons*). Set them in order here.—(*To Christ*). Yes, dearest son, here are the water-pots, which if you would but fill——

Christ. I fill them, mother! You have been too hasty in this business; for to whom but God do miracles belong? If then you call upon me to perform a miracle, in that case you would have me put myself in the Almighty's place, which no one ought to do.

Mary. But could you not perform this miracle, if you were only willing to do so?

Christ. Look, mother; what I will not do on your entreaty, is among the things I cannot do.

Mary. Indeed! Then I have done. I thought it might have been the means of bringing over to belief no few of such as are invited to this feast; but will not press the matter further. I consented, at the governor's request, to ask. I am acquitted of my promise, and retire.—
(*To the Servants, as she is going out*). I have, however, cause to think he will not let the entertainment of the feast stand still for want of wine. Whatever, therefore, he may order to be done, that do.—(*She goes out*).

Christ. Those words, addressed me by my mother, on her quitting the apartment, are not without weight. “I thought it might have
“ been the means of bringing over to belief no
“ few of such as are invited to this feast.”—
And would it not? Why, therefore, should I
hesitate

hesitate to work this miracle? Is it in any manner an abuse of my Almighty Father's power, to use it for confirming such in their belief, as have begun already to repose their faith in me, as they would do in one whom he has sent; or to bring over to that faith those, who as yet know nothing of me? Never, surely, can it be so: and if not, what opportunity so well adapted to this work, as such a meeting that has brought so many Jews together? I think better of it, so that I will gratify the governor's desire; and, more particularly so, since it will please my mother. Fill then all the pots brimful of water.—(*To his Disciples, after the Servants are withdrawn for water.*) Now, dear friends, if God be but propitious, and approve my thoughts on this occasion, you shall see an instance of his power vouchsafed to honour *one* whom you have chosen as your master. But do you, on your side, wish to see it?

Andrew. I, for my part, Lord, already have received full proof of your divinity, nor need I any other.

Peter. If to shew us what you are, you may be minded to perform this miracle, it would be, with respect to me, superfluous. My dear brother was the first that followed you: that circumstance, I think, sufficient for me. With-

out any miracle, my heart has faith enough within it to acknowledge you my Lord ; and should that title need addition thereunto, my God.

Philip. These likewise are my thoughts.

Nathaniel. And mine.

Christ. Yes, yes : I know what passes in your hearts on this occasion, but can see that, notwithstanding such is your belief in me already, as to need no proofs of what I am by signs, which contradict the course of nature, yet will the performance of a miracle contribute to establish your belief. With deference, therefore, to God's will, this miracle, which others stand in need of, shall not (for your profit) be denied : and see ! where they are coming back already with the water.—(*To the Servants entering*). You have not delayed : fill therefore all the water-pots till they run over.—Good, and now, stand every one of you apart, while I, in silence, hold communion with myself and God.

Andrew (to the rest, while Christ seems praying). What think you ? Will he actually turn the water into wine ?

Peter. No doubt, but he has power to do so ?

Nathaniel. Let us wait, and see the end.

Philip. But hark ! for he is saying something.

Christ.

Christ (in a tone of prayer).—Yes, Father, manifest thy power by this first miracle, and let the guests assembled here, as well as my disciples, be convinced that thou hast sent me.—*(After a pause).* I return thee thanks, for having heard my supplication, and the miracle is wrought.—*(To the Servants).* Come therefore near, good friends. Draw out, and let the ruler of the feast make trial of this present which God's Providence has thus vouchsafed us. Go, and let him taste the new-created wine; when, should he make enquiry where you got it, mention every thing you know.—*(The Servants go out with the vessels).*

Andrew. What will he think of such a wonder?

Peter. As of any other.

Philip. Think the change impossible.

Nathaniel. Or, till assured of the reality, deny it.

Andrew. And who would not?

Christ. Human beings cannot comprehend the process of a miracle: but human beings should not upon that account deny it; for can men see through a single operation in the works of nature? Can they tell, for instance, by what means God clothes the ground with grass in spring-time, and the trees with leaves or

blossoms? This proceeding is no less miraculous, than that of turning water into wine; and yet, what man of common understanding would deny, there are such things as grass, and leaves or blossoms? Why then should the ruler of the feast think such a change, as God has recently been working by my hand, impossible? or why should he consider it too difficult for heavenly power? But I observe the bridegroom: they have told what the Almighty has done for him; and at present he is coming to express his notions of the miracle.—Well, friend?

The Friend (re-entering with Servants). What thanks are suited to this benefit bestowed upon us, holy man of God?

Christ. Give God your praise for such a benefit bestowed upon you, and refrain from calling me in any manner holy. God alone is holy: but what say you to the wine?

The Friend. That it is excellent, and worthy of the power that gives it. Let these (*looking at the Servants*), witness for me, that on tasting, I could scarce believe my senses, though, as doubtless you have learned, I intimated to your mother, that a miracle was needful to keep up the pleasure of the feast. It was, however, scarce a minute, when I recollected every thing,

thing, and going to the ruler, who, on tasting, was as much astonished as myself, I told him, feigning ignorance, that "every man appointed " to conduct a feast was used at the beginning " of it to bring forth his choicest wine, and " after, when the guests had drunk sufficiently, " some worse; whereas," continued I, and left him, " you have kept the best till now." But come; for I have not yet told him of the miracle, which I will do when you are present, and so manifest your glory, not before *him* only, but the company. Come then, for we have staid too long already.

CCCLXXXI.

JOHN ii. ver. 13.

* THE TEMPLE PURGED BY JESUS CHRIST.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

THE time of the † first passover after Jesus Christ had entered on his ministry, being come, he left his dwelling at Capernaum, whither, with his parents and his brethren he had gone from Cana, after having wrought the miracle last mentioned, and went up, as was a custom with the Jews, to worship at Jerusalem.

On his arrival there, he came into the Temple, and was struck with indignation at the traffic carried on within its sacred walls. It

* It will be a matter of convenience, to deliver the life of our blessed Redeemer, in the order of the passovers, as they followed each other. This order is sufficiently discriminated.

† At this Article, begins the history of Christ's life and actions, between the first and second passover celebrated after the commencement of his ministry; but it is not very easy to determine in what order the several transactions came to pass between each passover, and *that* immediately succeeding it; on which account, we shall content ourselves with likelihood on this occasion, though indeed a perfect order is a matter of no consequence.

seems

seems that merchants publicly sold oxen, sheep, and doves therein for sacrifice, and that a set of men called money-changers, had their banks or tables to accommodate the people.

Such a prophanation of God's house transported him to a degree of vehemence, unknown till then in his behaviour, and which was not afterwards evinced, excepting on a similar occasion. In reality, he was a model of forbearance, meekness, and humility, surpassing all description, when himself alone was interested or concerned; but the Almighty's honour stood in question now; and therefore he observed no bound in venting his disdain or indignation, seeing such a gross pollution of the Temple going forward by permission of the priests, but made a scourge of cords with which he drove the traders out, together with the animals in which they dealt, and overthrew the changers' tables, saying: "Take these things away, and
" turn not such a holy place into a house of
" merchandize."

The Jews, who from the first annunciation of Christ Jesus, as the Saviour, who should come to be their king, had taken umbrage at his mean condition and appearance, were offended at this vehemence, and bade him shew some sign that might convince them he was

what he called himself, a person authorized to take such freedom with them: but, instead of such a sign, he answered them in words that afterwards were turned into a charge against him, namely these: "Destroy this Temple, and in three days will I build it up again."

By such an answer, Jesus Christ alluded to the Temple of his body: but the Jews considered the expression verbally, and thereupon made answer, saying: "Six and forty years this house of God was building, and will you pretend to reconstruct it in three days?" To such a question, Jesus Christ appears to have returned no answer, and the matter ended; for "his hour," (to use the very words of holy writ) "was not yet come."

* CCCLXXXII. TO CCCLXXXV.

MATTHEW V. vi. vii. &c.

CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT;
THE LEPER CLEANSED; THE SON
OF THE CENTURION HEALED;
AND PETER'S MOTHER CURED.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

SCENE. *Before a dwelling.*

TWO JEWS.

FIRST JEW.

THIS is the place, to which I wished to
bring you.

Second Jew. And why here particularly?

First Jew. For a special reason, which I
mean to tell you now, that we may stop, and
rest ourselves while we continue talking. We
are here, before the house of that disciple you
have heard called Peter, whither this surprising
man, this prophet, this Christ Jesus, is to come,
that he may heal the poor disciple's wife's sick
mother. He has promised he will do so.

* Between the first and second passover.

T 6

therefore

therefore may we for a certainty depend on his appearance shortly.

Second Jew. Thanks for so much courtesy, good friend. I could not have desired a greater pleasure than the sight of this extraordinary character; extraordinary, for the good he does. But tell me, if you can, where is he now?

First Jew. Perhaps not half a dozen furlongs off; for he descended scarce three hours ago, or less, if I remember what was told me, from the mountain, where he has been preaching to the multitude.

Second Jew. But know you on what subject?

First Jew. Perfectly; for never sure did sermon so impress my mind, and that of every one about me. What a faith must this be of his teaching! How unlike in every thing to what our legislator brought us! But what wonder? Moses' law was published in the midst of thunder: this comes to us, recommended by the voice of love.

Second Jew. You interest me greatly. Say then, what were the particular or leading points of this discourse, at which I had not the good fortune to be present? Tell me.

First Jew. Willingly.—It should appear, that as this teacher has but barely entered on the duties of his ministry, his great design in preaching

preaching such an exhortation was as follows: to apprize us fully of the excellence peculiar to the faith he comes to teach us, and to shew that he intends his visitation principally for the poor; not that the wealthy are excluded from the comforts of his doctrine, but that granting they would wish to be his followers or disciples, they must put off all their grandeur, and be clothed, if I may so express it, with humility.

Second Jew. Proceed, good friend.

First Jew. For, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," said the preacher: "Blessed too the mourner; the meek hearted; those who thirst and hunger after righteousness; the merciful; the pure in heart; the encouragers of peace; those persecuted for the sake of virtue; and such, finally, as all men speak amiss of, or revile unworthily on my account."

Second Jew. Amazing! Why what condescension must not every one give proof of, who would follow such a teacher!

First Jew. True: but you must own, this proves him come to all men; for the rich may easily evince this condescension, or be imitators of the poor; whereas the poor could not by any means have claimed a place among the rich, and imitated them, had he enjoined as much.

Second

Second Jew. I see this plainly : but what now is to become of Moses and his law ? Are they to be abolished ?

First Jew. To that very subject he adverted, and your question makes me recollect it ; for “ conceive not I am come,” said he, “ to take away the law and prophets, no, but to fulfil them ;” so that though I said just now, in admiration of his doctrine, how unlike it was to what our legislator brought us, all I meant was, how unlike in point of excellence ; as witness what he told us on the articles of murder and adultery, on putting wives away, on swearing, on the law of vengeance, and that difference of treatment Moses tells us we may shew our friends and enemies. In all these articles, the law of Moses is not abrogated, but the precepts are extended : as, for instance, first, in the enormous crime of murder.

Second Jew. Aye ?

First Jew. Would you believe it ? but he told us, that whenever we are even angry, and can give no reason for it, we incur the crime of murder in God's sight.

Second Jew. Indeed !

First Jew. Yes, truly : “ therefore,” said the preacher, “ if you come to worship God,
“ and

“ and recollect your brother has a cause of
 “ quarrel with you, leave the Temple, and let
 “ reconciliation first take place between you ;
 “ after which, and not till then, you may ex-
 “ pect that God will deign your worship, if
 “ no other obstacle estrange him.”

Second Jew. Is God, then, so strict as all
 this comes to ?

First Jew. It should seem indeed so : but,
 if this be strictness, what will you account his
 comment on the seventh commandment : for,
 if barely any one should look upon a woman,
 and desire her beauty, otherwise than in a law-
 ful manner, he is guilty of adultery : “ there-
 “ fore, if thine eye offend thee,” said this
 wonderful teacher, “ pluck it out ; for better
 “ is it thou shouldst lose a part belonging to
 “ thee, than preserve thy frame, and have it
 “ cast into hell fire.”

Second Jew. It never was so written in our
 law.

First Jew. Nor yet, what he delivered in his
 doctrine on that act of wives and husbands,
 which so frequently prevails among us, when
 they quit each other. “ Husbands, you are
 “ told,” said he, “ to give your wives a wri-
 “ ting of divorcement upon parting with them.
 “ But I say, whoever puts away his wife, ex-
 “ cept

“ cept it be for fornication, shall be punished
 “ by a God of justice, for the crime of having
 “ caused her to commit adultery, if in the
 “ sequel she be guilty of it. This I tell you,
 “ and moreover, that whoever marries any
 “ woman previously divorced, is likewise an
 “ adulterous person.”

Second Jew. In the world of matrimony, therefore, men have frequently to answer for adultery. But, on the law of swearing, what were his remarks?

First Jew. That notwithstanding Moses' law forbade false swearing, he enjoined us not to swear in any manner, save to magistrates, and for the sake of justice.—But on vengeance, what he said, is everlastingly to be remembered.

Second Jew. And what pray was that?

First Jew. I will repeat his very words, if I remember them.—(*After a pause*). Yes, thus:
 “ You are,” said he, “ permitted to claim eye
 “ for eye, and so forth, as is mentioned in
 “ your law, whereas *my* counsel is, that ye
 “ resist not evil; but if any man shall smite
 “ you on one cheek, in that case, rather than
 “ pursue him to his ruin for the insult, turn
 “ and let him smite the other.” This was on
 the article of vengeance; and his admonition

on

on the different treatment Moses tells us we may shew our friends and enemies, is no less worthy notice; for "whereas," said he, "the law allows your hatred of a foe, while you are friendly to a neighbour only, I, upon the other hand, say, love your enemies, give blessings in return for curses, and do good to such as persecute you: that by such proceeding, you may shew yourselves true children of your heavenly Father; for he makes the sun, with all its comforts, rise both on the wicked and the upright, and sends rain on the unjust, as well as just."

Second Jew. And thus he ended?

First Jew. Ended. Oh, not so. His sermon comprehended many other objects. He spoke afterwards of giving alms, which should be done (he said) so privately, that those bestowing should not let their left hand know (for such was his expression) what their right hand did. The same, he said of prayer and fasting. He advised us to reject all anxious cares in putting by, to serve the morrow; but whenever we were doubtful how we should get food or clothing, to reflect upon the birds and flowers, which Providence took care to feed and clothe, and rather seek God's kingdom and his righteousness; convinced that all inferior matters

matters should be added to us. From this subject, he proceeded to discourse of judgment, warning us against it, as ourselves would wish, that others should not judge us; and, beforehand, having specified a form of prayer, displaying the benevolence of God, by saying it exceeded infinitely that of any human father, who would never give his son a stone, when he approached and asked him for a bit of bread. I would go on, and tell you farther of this admirable sermon, if it were not for the noise I hear, though at a distance; but which tells me, he is coming. I shall therefore haste to the conclusion, which was this: that every one who followed his instructions, should be like a prudent man that built his house upon a rock, and which the tempest therefore could not overthrow. And saying this, he ended, when the people separated, having listened with astonishment; for he instructed them like one that had authority for such a purpose, and by no means like our scribes. This is the whole I had to tell you.

Second Jew. And in special time have you concluded; for behold, this teacher is already come in sight.

First Jew. He is so; and the crowd behind him, that made all the noise I overheard before
I ended.

I ended. Let us step a little on one side, and note him.

Enter CHRIST, and several people following him.

Christ. I can now attend to this poor leper's supplication. Bring him therefore through the crowd.—(*The people make a lane through which the leprous man approaches*). Here place him just before me.—Good.—So, tell me now what want you of me?

The Leper. Need I tell you, Saviour? I am covered with a loathsome leprosy. My body is all over tetter; and my heart, within me, sick: but you have power to make me whole, if you think proper.

Christ (putting forth his hand). I do think so. Be then whole.

The Leper. Oh happiest day of any I have lived to see! Oh blessed sound! But is not this a dream? No: my recovery from this dreadful malady is real; for I heard the word go forth, nor could it fail of its effect. I feel myself restored. I know I am delivered from my inward sickness; and these outward sores will very shortly disappear. This I am certain of. (*Offering to kneel*). Divine physician!—

Christ (preventing him) Let your thanks be paid to God; for it is God that has delivered you

you from this destroying malady, which you have faith sufficient to be certain will soon wholly vanish. God is your restorer: thank him, therefore: meditate, as long as you have life, upon the blessing thus vouchsafed, without informing any one among your neighbours of the event that thus has happened, and go shew yourself devoutly in the Temple with that gift, by way of testimony, which the prophet has commanded in his law.

The Leper. Yes, I will go. It is a debt of gratitude; and not *that* only, but a debt suggested by religion, likewise, for my happy restoration. Therefore, after I have paid it, let me have no wish but to return, and, were it possible, spend my whole life in blessings for my cure.—(*He goes out*).

First Jew. He goes; and see, another takes his place.

Second Jew. Who? which? and where?

First Jew. That Roman soldier coming forward through the crowd.

Second Jew. What! that centurion? Yes, he seems indeed as if he had some suit to make.

A Centurion (coming forward). Where is he, this great teacher, who performs so many wonders, and whose fame is going through the country?

Christ.

Christ. Is it I you wish to speak with, friend?

The Centurion. Ah Lord, if you are the physician I am come in quest of, hear me.

Christ. Well, speak then, and tell me what your suit is?

The Centurion. Rather, my poor servant's suit; for on my own account, methinks, I could be silent, and not trouble one whose disposition and capacity to do good actions, will undoubtedly invite petitioners to come and importune him.

Christ. Well; but let me know what ails this servant?

The Centurion. Sick, Lord, sick, and grievously afflicted with the palsy. His fidelity, since he has been my servant, claims whatever kindness I can do him, by thus coming to solicit in his favour. Hear me therefore, Lord, and heal my servant.

Christ. For that honourable testimony you afford him, shall your suit be granted. Be of comfort. I will go, and see him shortly.

The Centurion. Go and see him! What! shew such a condescension? And shall I permit it, when, I know, I am not worthy you should come beneath my roof? No, Lord, think not of such a visit: it would put me to confusion: but speak only, and my servant shall be healed,
for

for I am in authority, commanding soldiers; so that I can say to any one about me, "Go, or come, or do me such or such a business," and be sure of his obedience.—How then, if the case be so, can I suppose that *He* should order any thing in vain, whose works proclaim him sent from the divinity to men.

Christ (to those about him). Hear this, and wonder. I, for my part, am astonished, having never found such faith, no not in Israel; and indeed I tell you, that however you may call yourselves the children of the kingdom, many shall be gathered out of distant regions, and sit down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, in my Father's habitation; while those children of the kingdom shall be doomed to darkness, and there weep and gnash their teeth.—*(To the Centurion).* Go therefore, and let every thing be done as you believe.

The Centurion. Then, is my servant healed; for I believe the word that has been said. For him, and for myself, I would, if I had words, sufficient for that purpose, thank you as I ought; but he that has restored the leper, knows my heart.—*(He goes out).*

Christ. He quits us full of faith, and will review his habitation full of joy: but I delay too long; for Peter's mother needs me. This

is her abode ; and lo ! the door is open. Wait here friends : it is an act of charity that now demands my absence ; but e'er long, I will return to you again.—(*He goes out, and enters the abode*).

(*The Two Jews come forwards*).

Second Jew. And, do you think he will restore her ?

First Jew. Doubtless : did he not declare as much ?

Second Jew. We have beheld strange things this day !

First Jew. And shall behold still greater, if my notions of this prophet be well founded.

Second Jew. But what means this servant from the house ? Sure, by his looks, he comes to tell us something.

A Servant (coming in). Hear me, my good friends : the Master, by his power, has cured the poor sick woman, in whose favour some among you were so anxious.

First Jew. How ! so soon ?

Second Jew. Yes, in an instant. We were all assembled in the chamber, to behold what he would do, when he approached the bed, put forth his hand to hers, which touching, the disorder left her, and at present she is putting on her clothes, that she may wait upon him.

Second

Second Jew. Wait upon him! what, and will he not come out, that we may see him, after having wrought so great a miracle as that, of which you tell us, in addition to the rest performed before.

The Servant. No, friend; or not at least for some few hours to come. He is fatigued with going up and down, and needs refreshment both of food and rest. Depart then for the present: you will soon have opportunities of seeing him again: Go therefore. He deserves, you should not follow him when he would take repose.

Second Jew. And so he does. Let us be gone then: on the morrow, we shall hardly fail to find out where he bides. Come, friends.

* CCCLXXXVI.

FURTHER HISTORY OF CHRIST'S
LIFE.

ON the evening, after having cured, as mentioned in the article preceding, Peter's mother, Jesus being with the multitude, he cast out many evil spirits, and restored to health

* Between the first and second passover, &c.

all those they brought him. These surprising miracles attracting a prodigious throng about him, he went up into a ship with his disciples, ordering them to cross the sea of Galilee : but in the interim, a scribe appeared, protesting he would follow him wherever he might chuse to go. But Jesus Christ, to shew what hardships he must look for, if he kept his resolution, told him that the fox enjoyed his hole to lie in, and the bird his nest ; whereas the Son of man had no where to repose his head : and when another likewise promised he would follow him ; but first, must go and bury his departed father, he made answer, saying : “ Follow me immediately, and let the dead perform that office for their dead.” This answer being made, he went on board the ship, which, in an hour or two, was overtaken by a storm : but he was fast asleep. Those therefore then on board, came to him, saying : “ Help us, Lord, or we shall perish.” Being thus awakened, he rebuked the winds and seas, when every thing was quickly calm again about them.

Being come to land, two men possessed with devils met him : they were always in the tombs ; and seeing Jesus Christ, the spirits feared him, and besought, that if he cast them out, he would

permit their entering into certain swine; of which, a herd were feeding then no great way off. He gave them leave to do so, when the swine no sooner had received these guests, than all together they ran down a shelving place into the sea, and perished. This event had such effect upon the people of the country round about, that they came forth in numbers, and besought him to be gone.—He did so, and re-passing in the vessel, once more visited his native place.

And there he had not long resided, when they brought a palsied man: but as the crowd was so immense about the dwelling, that they could not enter at the door way, they went up with ladders, took the roof off, and that way obtained admission for the paralytic, whom they laid before Christ Jesus, having let him down upon his bed, by means of proper tackle. Jesus Christ, in approbation of their faith, addressed the patient, saying: “Be of comfort, son; thy sins are pardoned.” At this miracle, the Scribes were present, and accused him to each other of blaspheming, when he told the paralytic man his sins were pardoned. But Christ Jesus, being well acquainted with their thoughts, though they were not made public, asked them, why they plotted evil in their hearts;

hearts; for "whether of the two," said he,
 "is easier—to inform a suffering being that his
 "sins are pardoned, or to say arise and walk?
 "But," added he, "that ye may know for
 "certain, that the Son of man has power to
 "pardon men, not only do I tell you, that the
 "sins this paralytic has committed, are all
 "done away; but bid him likewise rise, and
 "walk." Yes, turning to the patient, he
 went on: "Be whole of thy infirmity; take
 "up the bed thou liest on, and go home."
 Which instantly he did; and when the multi-
 tude beheld it, they gave praise to God.

The next occurrence worthy notice, is the
 conversation which Christ Jesus had with one
 called Nicodemus, and a ruler of the Jewish
 people, who repaired to him by night, acknow-
 ledging he was a teacher sent from God; for
 "none," said he, "can do the miracles you
 "do, excepting God be with him."

But to shew the ruler, that a power of work-
 ing miracles was not so much the proof of
 being in God's favour, as a life of righteous-
 ness, Christ Jesus answered, saying: "Verily,
 "unless a man be born again, he cannot enter
 "into heaven." Nicodemus asked him, if a
 man, when old, could possibly be born anew,
 or enter once again into his mother's womb?

Christ. I mean, except a man be born of water and the spirit. What is fashioned by the flesh is flesh; but that proceeding from the spirit, spirit. Wonder not, that I affirm, you must be born again. The wind is heard. But no one can inform us whence it comes, or whither it proceeds; and so is every human being situated, born, as I have said already, of the spirit.

Nicodemus. How can these things be?

Christ. Are you a master here in Israel, and know you not thus much? I speak what I have seen, and testify the things I know, but Israel will not take my testimony. If then I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how can I expect you to give credit, when I speak of heavenly matters? Notwithstanding this, I must perform the business I am sent for: Therefore, do I tell you, that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, the Son of man must speedily be lifted up, that those believing on him may not perish, but enjoy eternal life; for God so truly loves mankind, that he hath given them his only Son; who therefore, comes not to condemn, but save them. He then that believeth on him, shall not labour under condemnation: but whoever lives without belief, is even in this world condemned,
because

because he places no reliance on the Son of God. And this is human condemnation, namely, that though light is come into the world, men rather chuse to live in darkness; proving by such preference, that their deeds are evil: for as many as do evil, seek not light, but hate it, lest their deeds should be detected: but all those that are in love with truth, love light; that what they do may be made manifest, as being wrought in God.

With this, the conversation ended, or at least we find no more related of it in the third of John, where this we have already mentioned may be found. However, at the twenty-second verse it tells us, that Christ Jesus, after this, removed into Judea, and remained with his disciples there, baptizing those who came to hear his doctrine.

Not far off, John likewise was baptizing, whom the people told as follows: " Rabbi, he " to whom you bare such witness, is himself " baptizing, and great multitudes go forth to " meet him." This perhaps was said to mortify the Baptist, but his answer disappointed their malignant expectation. " Nothing can a man " receive," said John, " except from heaven. " Yourselfs must bear me witness that I said, " *I am not Christ, but I am sent before him.* He

“ that hath the bride is in reality the bride-
“ groom: but the bridegroom’s friend, who
“ hears him, is rejoiced. I, therefore, upon
“ this account, rejoice. He must increase, but
“ I must, on the other hand, decrease. As
“ coming from above, he is above all human
“ beings: but myself, as being of the earth,
“ am earthly, and my talk is of the earth; but
“ he, whom God hath sent, speaks nothing
“ but the words of God; for not by measure
“ is the spirit of God’s grace dealt out to
“ him.”

CCCLXXXVII.

† CCCLXXXVII.

MATTHEW xiv. ver. 3.

JOHN THE BAPTIST THROWN BY
* HEROD INTO PRISON.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

SCENE. *An apartment in the house of Herod.*

HERODIAS and her DAUGHTER.

HERODIAS.

DEAR daughter, thank the gods, that notwithstanding you have lost your father, and were nearly on the point of forfeiting, without distinction, all your rights, this marriage of a mother, who so truly loves and dotes upon you, with her husband's brother, Herod, has restored you to those rights: but this abominable wretch, this John the Baptist, as they call him, who durst openly dissuade your uncle from his purpose, has so irritated me, that hitherto I know not in what manner I shall wreak my vengeance on him.

† Between the first and second passover.

* Not that Herod who destroyed the Innocents at Bethlehem, but another.

The Daughter. He is apprehended, and in prison, for the crime you have alledged against him: *That*, my uncle has proceeded to at your request. Thus much I know; but nothing further, no, not even his precise offence. Inform me then, dear mother, how he can have irritated you so grievously,

Herodias. Yes, child, you shall know every thing; when you will see how much the daring brute (for he has passed his life with beasts), presumed to shew himself our house's enemy. This John the Baptist is a prophet in the notion of his countrymen. Your father, being dead, I saw you left without a friend in this hard world, where women, and particularly those whom youth and beauty single out from their whole sex, are every day exposed to dangers. Thus, dear child, it was with you. I saw it, and beheld myself without a husband likewise, to subsist me in that state of grandeur I had figured in till then. What, therefore, could I do, if I was prudent, but avail myself of that small stock of beauty I had first of all received from nature, and allure some other man to make himself my husband, and become your guardian in the world. I fixed my choice upon your uncle for the purpose, and succeeded in my views, but that I need not tell you.

The

The Daughter. Certainly you need not, mother : but what reference has all this to John ?

Herodias. That you are going now to hear. He was enamoured of my person, and the nuptial day drew nigh. I had not been so cautious as to keep it secret, thinking such a measure useless, when behold you, this same John, apprized of Herod's view to marry with his brother Philip's wife, durst send him notice in the coarsest manner, that he might not lawfully espouse me.

The Daughter. Might not lawfully espouse you ! and why not ?

Herodias. Because I was his brother's wife,

The Daughter. But may not people marry such ?

Herodias. Not by that law the Jews acknowledge ; with this one exception, that the brother just before deceased have left no children ; and in that case, it requires the living brother should espouse the other's wife, and raise up seed to his departed brother. This, though not a Roman law, is one among the Jews, and though your uncle was not bound thereby, yet being governor of Galilee, and John his subject, this last mentioned thought himself intitled to obtrude the prohibition on his sovereign ; for these people fancy all the world should be directed

by their superstitions. Had your father left me childless, Herod might have freely had my hand : but having you, dear child, whose happiness was all the object of my heart, in laying out for such a marriage, I beheld myself upon the point of losing all my expectations. Thus did this insidious traitor aim the blow at you, when he attempted to prevent my marriage. Judge then if I had not cause to hate him.

The Daughter. You have, notwithstanding, wrought on Herod to lay hold upon, and throw him into prison.

Herodias. Yes, I have been able, though with difficulty, to accomplish my desires ; since Herod was restrained from openly avenging me upon the Baptist for his outrage, by a notion of the people's disposition in his favour ; all the Jews considering him a prophet : therefore, for a time, was Herod deaf to my solicitations, but at last complied, alledging, as his motive to the act of apprehending John, that correspondence he was publicly acknowledged to have entered into with one Christ, of whom the people talk so often, and who likewise, as we hear, asserts himself, commissioned by his God, to reinstate the Jewish people in their kingdom, subject now to Cæsar. This is the whole story you desired to hear ; and thus have
I secured

I secured this enemy of ours in prison, there to rot, or be delivered for no other purpose than to suffer execution.

The Daughter. You speak thus at present, being irritated ; but the time at last must come, when you will certainly relent, and after he has suffered for his rashness by a long imprisonment, forgive him.

Herodias. Never, never. I will rather part with life, than give up the least hope of my revenge. Believe not you, your mother's towering spirit, by evincing any of the milk of human kindness in your bosom, when the outrage put upon us both should turn the very fountain of your being into gall. What! shall this savage of a man have dared so gross an insult, and survive to boast that he has done it? Where, then, is the female spirit fled, if such dishonour must be borne with patience. I am now the wife of Herod, and by Herod must my vengeance finally be gratified, if I should prove so happy as to compass vengeance. I must therefore flatter him, with all the arts invention can suggest. Do you the same, dear child, till we can mould him as we please : and if you love your mother, let this recollection sharpen your intention, namely, that till such time as this enemy has felt how far an injured woman

can extend the rage of her revenge, I am unhappy.—Come this way; for I am now repairing to the presence.

CCCLXXXVIII.

JOHN iv. ver. 7. to 42.

CHRIST AND THE SAMARITAN AT
JACOB'S WELL.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

SCENE. *The fields near Sychar, a city of Samaria, with a well of water.*

CHRIST (*alone drawing near the well*).

THEY say, the fight of water is refreshing to a weary man; but surely, not unless he can obtain a draught thereof, to quench his thirst. It cannot then afford me any such refreshment; since, however parched I am, and wearied out with walking, there is nothing here to draw up any. I was well aware thereof, and needs must wait till some of the inhabitants come down for water, which they will not fail to do e'er long.—(*He sits down*). This is the well of Sychar, which the patriarch Jacob formerly gave Joseph. I will therefore tarry till I see

see some one or other of the people coming down, or else till the return of my disciples, whom I parted with but now, that they might buy provisions for us, being well assured, that in this country of Samaria, which I needs must pass through, in my passage towards Jerusalem, the inhabitants; so disaffected as they are at all times to the person of a Jew, will not afford me entertainment.—(*After having sat down*). Scorched! and wearied out with labour! Thanks to the Almighty's goodness for this rest however: others have still greater hardships in the world to suffer than fatigue occasioned by much motion. To the catalogue of human woes, they add fatigue, occasioned by much life in their afflicted situation, when to die would be an enviable fortune; and of this the Baptist is a melancholy instance.—Ah! May God take pity on thee: for a wicked woman will not, till by death thou art delivered from her persecution. Servant of that God who chose thee, short has been thy race, yet thou hast run it without fainting, and compleated thy career with honour. But, methinks, I see a person coming to draw water. Yes; and by good hap, a woman. Possibly, the softness of her sex will not allow her to alledge the hatred that subsists between Samaritans and Jews, as what
should

should of necessity keep back her hand from giving me so little as a draught of water. I shall shortly make experiment, how far her kindness will extend ; for she is now at hand.

Enter a SAMARITAN Woman with her pitcher.

Christ. God save you, my good woman. I was waiting for a friend : and you are come with such a title.

The Woman. Sir ?

Christ. Yes, I am waiting for a friend ; and you are come most opportunely. I am thirsty, famished for a draught of water. Be so charitable, as to let me drink a little from your pitcher.

The Woman. From my pitcher ? but, to judge from your appearance you must be a Jew.

Christ. I am a Jew indeed : but what of that ?

The Woman. How comes it then you should crave charity from one, that, as you know, is a Samaritan.

Christ. I judge you are a native of the neighbouring city, and am sensible, that both my countrymen and yours consider they must have no mutual dealings : but in works of charity, good friend, ought the antipathy to hold ? I only ask you for a draught of water. Would you have the heart to tell me you are a Samaritan, and need not minister, on that account,

to my necessities. Let me forget, if I am able, how my tongue cleaves to my palate, while I speak, and argue with you. Possibly you may not leave the place unbenefited.

The Woman. Well ; and what have you to say ?

Christ. I have to ask you, in the first place, then, if both Samaritans and Jews are not the children of one God ?

The Woman. Undoubtedly they are.

Christ. Then, granting your aversion, which I mean not to condemn, but only limit,—granting, I repeat, that your aversion to the Jews be reasonable, God must know it. Yet he enters not so far into your quarrel, as, on that account, or any other, to deny the Jews his benefits, but sends them rain and fruitful seasons, no less so than to the people of Samaria. His beneficence will not permit you therefore to withhold the dues of even friendship, and much less then charity, when you are earnestly besought to cheer the fainting frame of one, who, though he is a Jew, is, notwithstanding that, your fellow-creature. Shall I dare oppose my spirit of compassion to your want thereof ? Bear with me, that I speak with so much freedom to you ; for undoubtedly, if you had known the gift of God, and who is
your

your petitioner for drink, you would, yourself, have rather asked of him, and he would, on the other hand, have given you living water.

The Woman. Here, good man, here is my pitcher, draw, and drink as much as you think fit; or rather, let me draw the water for you. —Stay (*she advances to the well, and dips her vessel*).

Christ. Ah! now you are a woman, and as kind as nature and God's providence designed you, —(*He takes the pitcher, and prepares to drink*). God be praised for all his blessings!

The Woman (*after he has drunk*). Are you satisfied, good friend? I wish it were a better sort of drink; for you have taught me more compassion than I ever entertained before: but you have drunk enough, I see; and I may now talk with you. Have I leave?

Christ. As long as you think fit; for I am now a debtor to your kindness.

The Woman. You observed then, but just now, that had I asked, you would have given me living water: but, at present, you have nothing you can draw with, and the well is very deep, whence therefore could you possibly have got that living water. Are you greater than our great forefather Jacob, who bestowed this well upon us, after having drunk thereof, himself, his family, and cattle?

Christ.

Christ. Talk not of this well ; for he that drinketh of its water, shall inevitably thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water I can give, shall have a well within him, springing up to everlasting life.

The Woman. Is there such water in the world ; and is it yours to give ? Vouchsafe *me* then so great a gift, that I may never thirst again, or have the trouble of returning hither any more to draw.

Christ. I am disposed to gratify your wish ; but, first, go call your husband, and return with him yourself.

The Woman. I have no husband, sir.

Christ. In that you have but spoke the truth ; for you have been already five times married : but the man you live with now, is not your husband.

The Woman (aside). Not my husband ! Do I dream, or wake ?—(*To Christ*), Oh, sir, shall I conceal, or own my sin, to one that I discover is a prophet ? During many ages past, our fathers have performed their worship on this mountain : but you Jews assert, that at Jerusalem men ought to worship God. Are we then in the right, or you ?

Christ. Oh, woman ! hitherto indeed there has been one peculiar place where God was pleased

pleased to put his name: but now, the hour approaches, or is come already, when mankind shall neither worship in Jerusalem, nor on this mountain, rather than in any other place; but every where; and *that* with no less certainty of being heard, than if they lifted up their hands within his holy Temple, granting they but pray to him in spirit and in truth; for God expects such worshippers: since, being, as he is, a spirit, men no otherwise than by the spirit can approach him.

The Woman. Yes, of this I have already heard, and know, as well as all my countrymen, that the Messias will not fail to come, as we are promised in the law, and tell us every thing.

Christ. But what, if the Messias should be come already?

The Woman. Oh what happiness, if it were so!

Christ. Enjoy it then yourself, although no others should; for he is come indeed.

The Woman. He! Who? What? the Messias? Is he come?

Christ. He is, and now sits talking to you.

Here the Disciples ANDREW and his Partners enter.

Andrew. Who is with him?

Peter,

Peter. A Samaritan, it should appear.

Philip. Let us keep back a little, and not interrupt him.

Nathaniel. But, methinks, they only look at one another without speaking.

Andrew. We shall know, if we stand still and listen.

The Woman. I have held my tongue through wonder.—Is it possible? Are you then the Messiah? But my heart informs me you are nothing less.—Let me leave every thing, and go into the city with such tidings, as I have to utter. (*She leaves her vessel, and goes out.*)

Christ. She is gone; and here are my disciples.

Andrew (coming forward with the rest). Yes, good master, we have made what haste we could, and brought you victuals which we purchased in the neighbouring city. (*They produce it.*) Eat then, for no doubt you need refreshment.

Peter. You attend not to us, Master. What has happened? Has this woman then,—

Christ. I had forgot myself. I was absorbed in thought. I did not see what you had brought me; and even now, no matter. Let it serve yourselves; for I have meat, of which at present you know nothing.

Andrew

Andrew (to his partners). What means this? The woman surely must have brought him meat.

Christ. No, Andrew; for my meat is to perform the will of him that sent me, and complete his work. You may remark, perhaps, that four months hence will be the time of harvest, but I bid you lift your eyes up, and behold the fields, for they appear as if the harvest were arrived already. Every one that reapeth, counts upon receiving pay, and reaping fruit to everlasting life, that he who soweth seed, and he who bringeth in the harvest, may rejoice together. And herein is verified the saying, namely: that one soweth, and another reapeth. I have sent you forth to reap those fruits, whereon yourselves bestowed no trouble. Other men did that, and you have entered on their labours.

Andrew. Ha! here comes the woman back, and many of the city with her. What can be the meaning of it?

Christ. Stand you still: observe her, and say nothing.

Re-enter the SAMARITAN WOMAN, and many following her.

The Woman. This way, countrymen: this is the prophet: this is he who, as I just now told

told you, has made known what none, except a prophet, could have told me: namely, my whole life and conversation. Is he not the Christ?

A Samaritan. How gracious his appearance! He must be a man of God, indeed. Vouchsafe, on our request, to stay among us some few days at least. Our city is not half a furlong distant. We have had strange matters told us by our countrywoman here, and half believing her report are thus come down in such a body, not that we might entertain less doubt on the occasion, but believe with more assurance. Condescend then to accept our invitation, and stay with us for a season, that the morals of our city may be benefited by the presence and instruction too of such a teacher.

Christ. Is it possible! And can there be that faith in any city of Samaria, which all Israel put together has not shewn?

Another Samaritan. To strengthen and confirm that faith still more within us, be our guest.

The Woman. Yes, deign what we so earnestly desire.

Christ. Do with me as you will, good friends. Your love quite overcomes me, and I cannot but consent to such solicitation.

Third

Third Samaritan. Heaven be praised! Make way, and let us usher our illustrious guest into the city, as he merits.

Andrew (to his partners). They are bearing him along. Come let us follow.

Peter. Strange, that this reception of our Master should be thus reserved for the Samaritans! What will the people of Jerusalem think of it, when the fame of so much honour shewn him here, has reached them?

Philip. What—but let us follow; for already they have left us.

* CCCLXXXIX. CCCXC. CCCXCI.

THE RULER'S SON RESTORED, THE
CALL OF MATTHEW, AND A SUM-
MARY OF OTHER ACTS IN WHICH
CHRIST JESUS WAS CONCERNED.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

JESUS Christ, by this time, having tarried two whole days with the Samaritans, and been a witness of the faith evinced by many of them, quitted Sychar, and returned into the

* Between the first and second passover.

parts

parts of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine; and being come to Cana, he was met by one whom the Evangelists entitle, in their books, a nobleman, that is to say, a ruler, whose abode was in Capernaum, and whose son, as in the sequel, he informed Christ Jesus, lay just ready to expire. The ruler having heard of his return to Galilee, went thither and besought him, saying: "Lord come down, and heal my child; for he is lying on his death-bed:" Whereunto, Christ answered: "If ye have not signs and wonders ye will not repent." The ruler hearing this, and fearing that his child might in the interval expire, began to be importunate, and earnestly besought him to come down, before he died: But Jesus bade him go his way, with this assurance that his son already was restored. The nobleman believed the word, and left him to go home. When lo his servants met him on the road, with information of his son's recovery. On enquiring at what hour his fever left him, he was sure his restoration was a consequence of the Redeemer's power, and as the Evangelist informs us, he himself, as well as all his house, believed.

About this time, we are to introduce the Saviour's call of Matthew. Matthew was employed

ployed at the receipt of custom in his office, when Christ Jesus happened to pass by. Observing something in his countenance, as we must naturally think, entitled to consideration and esteem, he bade the man of office follow him as his disciple, which the man of office (justifying such a fair idea of him) did, inviting him soon afterward, as Luke informs us, to a feast.

In consequence of this, our Saviour sitting down to meat with Matthew, there came many publicans and joined their company. The Pharisees, who were a set of people very ceremonious in their manners, watched the conduct of Christ Jesus with a jealous eye, and as they hated men in such an office as his new disciple's, just as in these times *we* likewise do, they took offence, and drawing near, enquired of his disciples, why their Master eat with publicans, and, as they called them, sinners. But Christ Jesus gave them a sufficient reason for his conduct, saying: "If these publicans
 " are such as you describe them, for that very
 " reason I sit down amongst them; since I
 " came not to call righteous men, but sinners
 " to repentance."

All the other acts of Jesus Christ, till his appearance at Jerusalem, that he might worship
 ship

ship at the following passover, are these that follow:

1. Jairus's departed daughter brought to life.
2. Two blind men restored to sight.
3. A dumb demoniac cured. [*These three recorded in St. Matthew.*]
4. Christ Jesus's apology, when censured for not fasting, and for plucking ears of corn upon the sabbath. [*This in St. Mark.*]
5. The miraculous draught of fishes. [*This in St. Luke.*]

* CCCXCII. CCCXCIII.

JOHN v. ver. i.

THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED AT
BETHESDA, AND THE SUPERSTI-
TION OF THE JEWS.

AFTER CHRIST'S BIRTH 30.

THE second passover was now come after Jesus Christ had entered on his ministry, and he went up again, as usual, to Jerusalem.

* Between the second and third passover after the commencement of Christ's ministry.

St. John informs us that a pool was at Jerusalem, in Hebrew called Bethesda, with five porches. In these porches, lay a multitude of people, having many ailments, waiting for the agitation of the water by an angel, who came down at certain seasons for that purpose; after which, whoever first got down into the pool, was healed, whatever malady he happened to lie under.

Among others, in these porches lay a man who had been eight and thirty years afflicted with a spirit of infirmity; whom Jesus seeing, and apprized of his condition, he addressed him, saying: "Wilt thou be made whole?"

The poor man answered, "I have no one
" friend, that when the pool is troubled, will
" assist me to get in: of course, when I am
" going down, another steps before me, so that
" I am disappointed."

Jesus being moved with pity, bade him rise, take up his bed and walk. The man did so; and Jesus, having wrought this miracle, departed, without telling who he was.

It was the sabbath-day, however, when the man received his cure. The Jews observed him walking with his burthen, and were scandalized thereby: "It is the sabbath-day," said they. "It is not lawful for you thus to bear
" your

“ your *bed :” to which, he answered : “ He
 “ that made me whole, commanded me to
 “ bear it.” *He that made you whole,*” replied the
 Jews, “ and who was that ?” The man could
 not inform them, for the reason mentioned just
 before.

Upon the following day, however, he was
 met by Jesus in the Temple, who addressed
 him in the following words : “ Behold, thou
 “ art made whole ; see therefore that thou sin
 “ no more, lest something worse befall thee.”

Being now informed of his physician, he
 communicated what he knew to the assembled
 Jews ; who having hated Jesus Christ before,
 affected now to hate him still much more, for
 having wrought this cure upon the sabbath-
 day. This charge they brought against him
 openly ; but Jesus cleared himself by urging,
 that in doing good he did but imitate the ex-
 ample of his Father, meaning God, whose
 Son, he said, he was. If, therefore, pre-
 viously to this avowal, they had sought (which
 was the case), to kill him ; much more did
 they therefore seek to kill him now, for calling

* “ Neither carry forth a burthen out of your houses on the
 “ sabbath-day.”

Jeremiah xvii. ver 22.

460 THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED, &c.

God his Father: but he vindicated the avowal, shewing, by the testimony of his Father, of the Baptist, of his works, and of the scriptures, who he was. — All this is more at large recorded in the twenty-nine last verses of the fifth of John, which see: the matter being much too long for introduction here.



END OF VOL. III